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VASSILI VERESTCHAGIN.

REVISED EDITION

VASSILI VERESTCHAGIN

PAINTER, SOLDIER, TRAVELER

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN AND THE FRENCH

BY

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With Illustrations
After Drawings by the Author

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

As it would take too long to give a complete account of all my travels and experiences, I have selected certain characteristic episodes here and there and put them together in a book of sketches. The reader must understand that this is but a collection of notes without any pretensions to literary style—studies, not pictures.

CENTRAL ASIA.

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CENTRAL ASIA.

SAMARCAND.

All we conquerors of Samarcand, following the example of General Kaufman, took up our quarters in the palace of the Emir ; the general in the main building, which consisted of a few very large and lofty rooms, and the rest of us, who composed his staff, in the huts that surrounded it. It was the lot of my friend, General Golovatchof, to be awarded the premises hitherto held sacred to the harem of the Emir, the beauties of which the sturdy and gallant warrior could only reflect on, as the birds had all flown from the cage before our advent.

General Kaufman's rooms and our own huts communicated with the celebrated throne-room of Tamerlane, a court surrounded by a cool and lofty gallery in which was placed the very throne itself, a block of white marble with beautiful ornamentation in relief. To this court the sovereigns and ambassadors of Asia and part of Europe had eagerly thronged to do homage and bring presents. Seated on that throne Timur-Lyang (literally *lame iron*) had received his numerous vassals. I often paced that gallery with General Kaufman and talked of the place we now occupied, the travelers who had preceded us, and the books that had been written upon it. We were surprised at the inaccuracies of Vambéry, who has maintained, for instance, that the throne, Koktash, was green, and that there was an inscription on an iron tablet behind the throne, whereas the throne is really white and the inscription is on stone. Indeed, General Kaufman, in view of these glaring inaccuracies, expressed it as his opinion, that Vambéry had never been to Samarcand at all.

I rode about the town and outside of it every day, inspecting the mosques, bazaars and schools, especially the older mosques, among which some remarkable specimens still remained. There was so much material for study and sketching that it was difficult to decide which I should begin with ;

the scenery, buildings, costumes, faces and manners, were all new, original and interesting.

* * *

Rumors reached us that the Emir of Bokhara was marching on us with an army of 30,000 men to recapture his lost capital. Kaufman prepared to march against him, and sent detachments in all directions to quiet the population in the vicinity of the newly acquired city—the gorgeous, incomparable, divine Samarcand—a city, the glories of which have been sung by the ancient and modern poets of the East, whose metaphors must of course be taken *cum grano salis*, for Samarcand itself, like all Asiatic centres, is foul and malodorous.

General Golovatchof was sent to occupy the fortress of Kati-Kurgan ; I accompanied him on this small expedition in the hope of seeing a little real fighting at close quarters, but was wofully disappointed : with the exception of dust, I saw nothing. The fortress surrendered without a blow, to the intense disgust of the officers of the expedition. Strandmann, who commanded the cavalry, was so indignant at the pacific turn of events, that he entreated the general to hand him over the messengers who had been sent to inform us of the surrender of the fort, with a view to inculcating the rudiments of courage in them. The action which our expedition so ardently longed for slipped through our fingers, and with it all the rewards, distinctions and promotions—it was most provoking.

We laughed heartily at the method resorted to by this same cavalry officer to get meat for his Cossacks. As the inhabitants drove their cattle away from every part of our road, and as it was consequently impossible to get anything, this gallant officer determined to take energetic measures. He called a troop-sergeant and asked him : "Why do our oxen pasture so far off ?" The troop-sergeant was astounded. "What oxen, your honor ?" "Our oxen, I tell you. Can't you see them ?" And he pointed toward some oxen pasturing on the rich and extensive plain of Zaryevshan. "No, I cannot, your honor." . . . "Don't answer me ! Drive them up here at once." A few oxen were driven up to the men, and were eaten up so quickly and entirely, that when the owners came to complain to the general, neither bones nor

hides could be found. The general, however, understood the trick and paid up.

Pistolkors, a gallant Caucasian officer, was sent from a detachment to fight a mass of Usbek troops, from Shah-Risyabz and Kitab, who were advancing from the southwest. He was successful, and then, according to the custom of victors, slept on the field of battle. But as soon as he turned to march back, the enemy attacked him again, and came to Samarcand, as the saying is, "on his shoulders." General Kaufman, followed by us, went out to meet the returning detachment, but we had scarcely reached the suburbs of the town before we were met by bullets, and from the surrounding gardens so lively a musket-fire opened on us, that we were compelled to send a few of the Cossacks who formed our escort to attack the enemy. To get our commander-in-chief out of danger, we were obliged to turn back, somewhat chagrined. Many of the officers of the detachment expressed their disgust at this victory which looked so much like a defeat, and I heard that Colonel Nazaroff, a gallant officer and a jovial soul, openly called the march back to Samarcand a rout, for which he was put under arrest by Kaufman, and forbidden to take part in the future military operations.

This apparent defeat gave the natives courage. The enemy not being cut down, but only soundly thrashed, rallied quickly and made their presence felt, as is nearly always the case in the East. However this might be, rumors kept reaching us that the town was surrounded by the enemy.

We did not trouble ourselves much about that. The idea did not even occur to me that the entire expedition might be in peril, or I, myself, in imminent danger. Every day I rode about the bazaar, attended by a Cossack, and into all the alleys and by-ways of the town; it was not until afterward that I understood how great a risk I had run. Even before the departure of the commander-in-chief, in riding through the streets, my attention was attracted by knots of people, chiefly young and middle-aged, who had assembled to listen eagerly to the harangues and sermons of their mollahs. On the day of Pistolkors' return with his detachment, these sermons were particularly lively; it was quite clear that the people were being summoned to a holy war against the infidel. On one occasion, when it occurred to me to make a short cut from the bazaar to the citadel through some by-

streets, I found myself opposite the large court-yard of a mosque full of people, who were being addressed by a man in a red robe, manifestly an emissary from the Emir of Bokhara. I finally met my old friend, the mollah of the mosque, Shirdar, walking through the bazaar and exciting the people by gestures and speeches.

"How are you, Mollah?" I shouted to him. He seemed much confused, but answered me politely, and was compelled, apparently much against his will, to press my outstretched hand.

As soon as General Kaufman had marched out of the town, rumors began to reach us of an intended rising among the population. But I had so long moved about among the natives with complete confidence, both by day and by night, that the very idea of a possible change in my relations with them was repugnant to my mind. At that time I left town on the way to Shah-Zinde, the former summer palace of Tam erlane, where I sketched one of the mosques which contained some of the wonderful tile-work with which it had at one time been covered.

* * *

I became so disgusted with the sand and continual dust which met me everywhere instead of action, that I determined to seize the first opportunity of leaving Samarcand, and to take a journey to Kokand, for which purpose I took leave of General Kaufman. However, on the very day after his departure, I discovered that an opportunity would not speedily present itself, as the town was supposed to be surrounded by the enemy, and it would have been necessary to send a large escort to protect us. Unfortunately, the entire force at our disposal for the defence of the fortress and manning of the walls, which were about two miles in extent, did not amount to more than 500 men.

The next day, early in the morning, Major Serroff, the Cossack officer who had been left in charge of the native population, came to my tent and entreated me to discontinue my expeditions into town, which he assured me was full of armed men already openly hostile to us. Shahriszab's men were said to be marching against us, a revolt was to be expected at any moment, and probably an attack on the citadel. "For God's sake," he implored me, "do not set your foot outside the fortress. You are sure to be killed if

you do. All trace of you will be lost, and we shall be unable even to discover your murderers." I must confess that I did not even then believe in the existence of any real danger, and would have ridden out of town again if it had not been for a sitting promised me by a Persian from an Afghan contingent, whom I was then sketching, and whose portrait I had begun only the day before.

AN AFGHAN.

The report with reference to the approach of the enemy from the direction of the khanates was confirmed on the fol-

lowing day. On leaving my hut early in the morning I saw all the officers of the fortress on the roof of the palace, with glasses in their hands. They invited me to look, and I perceived clearly with the naked eye that the heights of Tchopan-Atta, which commanded the town, were completely covered with troops, all apparently well armed, for their well-polished guns gleamed in the distance. Along the lines I could see their commanding officers riding up and down, and orderlies being sent off on different missions. Some of the officers in our group expressed the opinion that the enemy would shortly storm the fort, but others did not believe that this could be possible ; I was among the latter. Among us was Major Stempel, the commandant of the fortress, Serroff, whom I have already mentioned, and Colonel Nazaroff, who had been left behind at Samarcand in punishment for his unbridled tongue, and whom I did not as yet personally know.

I had nearly sketched my Afghan, the legs being all that were still wanted, but apparently it was not destined that I should finish him. In the evening, I remember, I went, on the invitation of an officer of sappers, to see how the earthworks were being thrown up around that part of the fortress which faced the town. Before his departure, General Kaufman had intrusted to this officer the important duty of repairing those sections of the fortress walls which had grown weak and crumbling from old age, and had rendered an entrance easy ; but the engineers probably doubted the possibility of a serious attack, for they worked indifferently and showed but little energy ; it was not until the enemy made their appearance on the heights of Tchopan-Atta that they began work in earnest at their mole-like task. We had reason to be grateful to them that at least the largest and most important breach in the fortress had been repaired. If this had remained as it was until the attack had begun, the citadel would have fallen into the hands of the enemy in half an hour's time.

* * *

On the following day, I had just sat down to drink the tea brought by my Cossack, and was about to finish the sketch of my Afghan, when I suddenly heard a terrific shouting, which was kept up unceasingly, of " Urr ! Urr ! " together with the sound of musketry. I understood the seriousness of the situation : They were storming the fortress. I seized my

revolver and ran in the direction of the shots, toward the Bokhara gates. I saw Serroff standing pale and wan, before the gate of his house, nervously twisting his mustaches, the usual gesture of this gallant Cossack in difficulties. "Here's a nice mess! Here's a nice mess!" he kept repeating. "Why, do things look bad?" I asked. "Not as yet. But what are we to do? Do you know we have only about 500 men in the fortress, and, according to my information, they must have at least 20,000?"

I ran on farther, and arrived at the Bokhara gate. On the rampart above soldiers could be seen running up and down in the smoke exchanging shots with the enemy. I ran out to them, and seeing the small number of defenders, I seized a gun from a dead soldier, filled my pockets with cartridges, also taken from the dead, and remained for eight days with my soldier comrades, helping to hold the fort. It is as well to point out that I did not do this from any particularly heroic impulse, but simply because our garrison was so very weak. Even the convalescent had been summoned from the hospital to augment the number of bayonets. Under these circumstances it would have been a disgrace for a hale and hearty man like myself to hang back.

On the first attack the gates were hastily closed so that the enemy was thrown back from the walls, and, retreating on the huts that almost adjoined them, opened a most deadly fire upon us. Their guns seemed to be inferior; their bullets were large, but their aim was exceedingly good. It was difficult to respond to their firing promptly, as they shot at us from behind small loop-holes cut in the walls of the huts. We had no embrasures, and had to fire under the cover of the half broken ridges of the walls, which involved the exposure of our men and caused considerable loss. I saw a soldier adroitly seize the opportunity of firing, and succeed in picking out an incautious Uzbek who had shown himself at a hut. He also managed to send a bullet right into an embrasure so cleverly that he injured the gun and probably damaged the nose of its proprietor, for the firing from that quarter ceased for some time. This feat greatly pleased the soldier. He worked with renewed vigor, joked, and suddenly fell down like mown grass with a ball in his head. His unused cartridges I seized as my heritage.

Another soldier was hit in the ribs by a bullet, he dropped

his gun, ran up and down the battlements in a sort of circle, screaming : "Oh, brothers ! They have killed me ! Death has found me out ! " "What are you shouting for, my good fellow ? " his next man asked him. "Lie down." But the unfortunate man could not hear him. He described another circle, staggered, fell down and died. His cartridges also found their way into my wallet.

Soon Major Albedil arrived and took the command from his junior officer. He inspected the position the enemy had taken up, made a few dispositions, but did not command us very long. I remember I was talking to him when he was suddenly doubled up and exclaimed : "I am wounded ! " I took him on my shoulder, and with the aid of a soldier carried him to the bandaging station, which was close to the palace of the Emir and nearly a mile from the gates. Albedil gave his last orders bravely and distinctly. He exhorted his disconcerted men to hold themselves well together and not to give in ; he then grew so weak and helpless, that I had not the heart to leave him to the soldier, but carried him to his quarters myself. The wounded man felt sadly fatigued on the way, but unfortunately there were no litters to be found. He had to drag himself along, leaning on me. "I feel," he said, "that my wound is fatal. My life is over." I persuaded him, of course, that he would survive. "The wound is in the soft part of the leg," I said. "It will heal up ; you will be all right soon, and dance again." And indeed it did heal up, and Albedil did dance again, but the Bokharian bullet did more damage than I expected ; it did not break the bone, but grazed it, and caused the victim much pain and trouble for months and even years.

Having consigned Albedil to the care of a doctor, I ran back to the gates, where the firing and roar were as bad as ever. In a turn of the wall, a little to the left, I came upon a group of soldiers huddled up together, cheering in a feeble, undetermined sort of way, and firing desultorily in the direction of the battlements, where one could see the heads of the attacking force peeping over every now and then. "We shall all die here," the soldiers were muttering gloomily. "Oh ! God ! we are punished for our sins ! How are we to get out alive ? Thanks to Kaufman, who has deserted us and left the fortress unrepaired." I did my best to encourage them. "Are you not ashamed to cave in like

that? We will hold out. Can it be that we shall allow ourselves to be taken alive?"

The men were much frightened by certain fiery bodies which the enemy threw at us over the walls, much resembling Greek fire.

A little further on I saw an officer arrive at the walls with a small contingent of men. This was Colonel Nazaroff, whom I have mentioned before, and who, in view of the imminent peril to which the fortress was exposed, had very sensibly forgotten all about his being under arrest, and had collected all the convalescent soldiers of his battalion in the hospital who were able to hold a gun, and appeared where the danger was greatest. The men ran up to him quite lost. "Your honor, the enemy is breaking in!" "Don't be afraid, my comrades, I am with you," he answered with an air of calmness and confidence that at once soothed the men, who had completely lost their spirit from the incessant storming and terrific shouting of the enemy. From that moment the colonel and I were inseparable, during the whole of that eight-day siege so memorable in the chronicles of Central-Asian warfare.

Again we heard renewed shouts of "Urr! Urr! Urr!" coming nearer and nearer, and above us we could see the heads of a few of the attacking party, apparently preparing to jump into the fortress. Our men, without waiting for the word of command, fired a volley, and the heads disappeared, and all was quiet again. The mob had evidently retired on finding so warm a reception where they had hoped to effect an unresisted entrance. It appeared that a footpath led up to this place at the wall, and that the battlements being broken, the footpath was continued on our side. There had not been time to dig up this pathway, and it was evident that the townspeople, who knew all these unofficial entrances to the fortress, were conducting the attacking force along this path.

* * *

At this juncture a section of our men was sent from this part of the wall to another, a little to the right of the gate, but messengers soon returned to Nazaroff pale as death, shouting: "Over there, your honor! Over there! They are breaking in, your honor!" We ran off in the direction they pointed to and found several Usbeks hard at work at a breach that had been imperfectly stopped up with small trunks

of trees. They were fine, strong chaps, with sunburnt faces, but they did not wait for our bayonets, nor even our bullets, but ran away at the very sight of us.

This weakened fortress, two miles in circumference, was in ruins everywhere. There was no point at which an entrance could not have been easily effected, and as there was a perfect labyrinth of huts inside, it would have been exceedingly difficult to exterminate even a small party of the enemy if they had once succeeded in effecting an entrance.

USBEK FROM SHAHRISYABZ (*Slave Trader*).

It is with mixed feelings of amusement and pain that I remember how, when we returned from the last adventure, and Colonel Nazaroff suggested this would be a good opportunity for discussing a basin of soup, some soldiers came running to us from our old position shouting : "Your honor, please come here ; they are breaking in." We ran off again. There was a tremendous noise, but as yet we could see no one. The noise grew louder and louder, and we could at last distinguish the shouts of separate voices. It was clear that they were making for the breach that was close to us. We went over there, hid ourselves behind the wall, and waited. "Let us mount the ramparts and meet them there," I whispered to Nazaroff. "Hush," he replied, "let them get in." This situation I have since made the subject of a picture. We heard shouts over our very heads, and could see the enemy crawling up to the ridge of the ramparts ; suddenly a loud cheer rent the air from our side, and such a volley was poured into them, that this time also our bayonets had no work to do. The enemy ran from the bullets.

These incessant attacks had a very discouraging effect on our men. We could hear them repeat that they knew they would have to "lay down their bones and die." It needed all Nazaroff's energy and humor to keep up the men's spirits and make them laugh now and then. On the whole I was much impressed by their serious demeanor during action. Even in the intervals between the attacks the enemy gave us no peace. They crept up to the ramparts in small detachments, and would fire off their guns before we caught sight of them, and get under cover before our soldiers, taken unawares, had time to respond. They thus did us considerable damage, injuring many men, whereas our return shots scarcely did more than tear up the earth of the earthworks. This made me furious, and I stood for a long time, gun in hand, waiting for the appearance of a sunburnt head, and unable to contain myself, used some pretty strong language. Immediately the soldiers stopped me. "It is wrong to swear now," they said ; "this is not the time." At first the men used to call me "Worthy Sir," but when Nazaroff called me by name, Vassili Vassilievitch, they all took it up, and soon the whole garrison, even the inmates of the hospital followed his example.

It was at this period that Captain Mikhnevitch, a fine,

gallant fellow who commanded the garrison artillery and was almost everywhere at once, served out hand-grenades to throw over the ramparts into the enemy's midst. In the mean time, however, the shouting had ceased and we did not know in what direction to throw them, besides feeling that the enemy might be meditating some new move. It was absolutely necessary to look over the ramparts to discover where the enemy were, and what they were up to. The officers ordered several soldiers to mount, but they did not seem to care about going, one pushing another in front of him—it looked like certain death. "Wait," I exclaimed, "I know gymnastics," and before Nazaroff had time to shout: "What do you mean? Don't do it! Come back," I was high up. "Come down! come down!" Nazaroff implored, almost in a whisper, but I did not come down. I was ashamed to, though I must confess I did not like my position. I stood there under the battlements bending down so as not to be seen, and reflected on what I was to do. I felt that if I bent over those battlements and showed myself, I should be killed. I stood thus and thought. These reflections in times of great peril pass through one's brain in rapid succession, and in the course of one or two seconds, I was standing bolt upright! Before me I saw a vast crowd of people close up to the ramparts and distributed among the huts, and a little to one side of it a knot of men, in large turbans, who were evidently holding a sort of council of war. All these people lifted up their heads when they saw me appear and seemed for a time to be quite aghast at the unexpected apparition. This saved me. When they had recovered themselves, they shouted: "*Mana! Mana!*" "there! there!" and I had only time to stoop down when the bullets began to rain on the ramparts and imbedded themselves in the walls. A perfect fire was poured upon the spot where I had appeared. "Come down at once!" shouted the brave Nazaroff; and I need not say there was no occasion for him to repeat the request. I pointed out the place where the crowd was thickest, and our hand-grenades soon played terrific havoc, making thereby an unearthly noise: Our object had been gained!

* * *

As Nazaroff was his own commanding officer, and could move about from one place to another as he thought fit, we

went off to an angle in the fortress from which both lines of ramparts could be seen for a considerable distance. I may mention by the way that the citadel walls of Samarcand were exceptionally high and massive, so that if it had not been for the ravages of years, or rather centuries, we need have had no fear. The drawback was that owing to the many breaches it resembled a sieve more than anything else, and had to be defended at too many different points at one and the same time; and as I have already stated, we had only 500 men to do this with, besides the sick and convalescent, all of whom were utilized as much as possible. Many were so weak that they could not even cheer, and it was as much as they could do to keep their muskets in their hands. Sometimes when a comrade was wounded or killed, one was tempted to lose patience with them and shout angrily: "What do you mean by standing like that? Give us a hand to carry him off; don't you see the poor fellow is shot?" But the only reply was a languid, "I can't. I—am—one of—the—weak ones." "Then why did you come here if you can't move?" "Don't know. We were all ordered to the ramparts."

We made ourselves very comfortable at our new post of observation. My Cossack, who had found me out and had refused to leave his master, was sent off to fetch my cigars, and Nazaroff ordered some bread and *vodka* (whiskey). We ate and we smoked. What a luxury! The cigars produced such an animating effect, that I bought another box, and distributed its contents among the men in our vicinity. Everybody commenced smoking. Some cabbage soup was then brought us, and we fortified ourselves. After my tea in the morning, which I had not had time to finish, this was especially acceptable. Nazaroff and his entire force disposed themselves in the shade of the huts; but I, with a few volunteers, kept on the ramparts, and found relaxation in sharp-shooting. Every now and again we spotted a man. It was like having the satisfaction of knocking over a rabbit or a hare. I remember how a man next to me knocked over a fellow, but did not kill him. The soldier wanted to give him another dose of lead to settle him, but his comrades would not let him. "Leave him alone," they said; "don't hurt him." "But he will run away," the soldier replied. "Never mind," said his comrades; "he is a non-combatant now." The wounded man did indeed succeed in getting away.

But he managed to do so most artfully, probably fully convinced that he had succeeded in cheating us. He had fallen across the road near the ramparts, and so he commenced to roll slowly from side to side so as not to excite our suspicions, and thus slowly rolling along, he rolled himself into cover, where he was pulled in by several hands, the owners of which were no doubt quite convinced he had played a very smart trick, for of course they would never have thought of accusing a Russian of acting on the principle of not hitting a man when he was down.

With the exception, however, of one or two similar instances of sentimentality, our fellows gave no quarter, nor did we receive any ourselves. The shots all came from the huts, and all from guns placed in loop-holes, and aimed straight at any of our fellows who showed themselves. Frequently the bullets hit the embrasures that our sappers had cut. Once I remember a bullet of this kind tore up the earth in an embrasure close to which I was sitting, and just as I was going to pull the trigger. The sand and stones flew about my face and I could not contain myself, but put my hands to my head. "Take him away," Nazaroff shouted, thinking I was wounded. On another occasion while taking aim, I was talking to a soldier near me, when I suddenly heard a blow against a soft substance, I turned round and saw my neighbor had dropped his gun, was foaming at the mouth, and then suddenly turned a somersault over the wall.

Nazaroff and two young officers, whose names I have forgotten, made themselves thoroughly at home. He sent around a double allowance of *vodka*, and cracked jokes with the men in the most good-humored manner as was his wont. Indeed, to judge by the sound of laughter and merriment that reached my ears, one would not have supposed that there was anything like danger near us.

* * *

However, this little fortress idyl did not last long. Soon we heard near the Bokhara gate the well-known sound of shouts of attack coupled with firing, and then a soldier ran up and asked for assistance, as the enemy were pressing them closely. Nazaroff left some men to keep a look-out at his point of observation, and ran off to the gates. The officer in command here willingly put himself under Nazaroff, and so

did Captain Tcherkasoff with his sappers. The attack was again repulsed. It was now getting late. A copper tea-pot was brought, and we commenced drinking tea, but we were not destined to enjoy it. A fresh attack was made on us. I involuntarily remembered my morning tea, which was still perhaps standing unfinished in my room, and my Afghan, whose legs I had not drawn in, but whom I hoped to complete.[1] This time the enemy somehow retreated very quickly, but soon after their departure smoke was seen rising from the gates. Confound them! they had set the gates on fire! Such was indeed the case. Soon a strong flame could be seen rising in the darkness. As soon as the gates burst, a fresh attack was made, this time a long and obstinate one. We fired at each other nearly muzzle to muzzle. The noise and tumult were diabolical. In the midst of this uproar I shouted to the men, who were firing wildly in the air: "Don't fire at the sky! Whom are you aiming at there?" "We are frightening them," was the perfectly serious answer.

I succeeded in shooting two of the attacking party. "Take your time in firing," I said to myself, "put your gun band here and wait." I put my gun on the ridge of the wall, and just then one of the enemy ran across the road, under the gates, with his musket slung over his shoulder. I fired, and he fell dead. The shot was at so short a distance that my unlucky victim's wadded cloak (kaftan) caught fire and kept burning slowly, until the poor fellow was charred all over and turned into coal. He had moved his hand to his mouth at the time he was shot, and this hand remained in that position. This black mass remained lying about for a whole week until our men returned; the entire garrison marched over it. The other fellow was shot in much the same manner. The men said: "Look at Vassili Vassilievitch, what pains he is taking for us!"

There is a silver lining to every cloud. As soon as the gates were burned, Tcherkasoff erected an excellent barricade with sacks, behind which a gun loaded with grape was placed. Here our conversation was somewhat different.

It had grown dark, the fallen beams and boards of the gate were still lightly glowing. Nazaroff had disposed his

[1] This Afghan is at Mr. J. N. Terestchenko's Gallery, in Kief, without his legs.

men so that they could not be seen by the enemy, only their bayonets were visible, glistening in the dark. All that could be seen in the centre were the guns and the man to serve them with their officer. Their white shirts and tunics stood out boldly in the light of the flames. And now we could hear a noise approaching by degrees, which turned into a sort of hoarse roar of many thousand voices shouting: "Allah! Allah!" Presently we saw figures advancing; none of them fired; they carried their scimitars and muskets in their hands. Like sheep, with their heads well down, they threw themselves on the gates and the gun. The loud voice of Lieutenant Slujenko could be heard clearly giving the word of command: No. 1. The next sound was the terrific thunder of the gun, followed by a complete silence. Nothing could be distinguished in the smoke. The stillness lasted for about a minute, and then voices were heard again in the distance. The enemy had been driven back and were probably comparing notes, quarreling amongst themselves and abusing each other, much to our delight. These attacks were continued for a considerable time; each descent was made with increased impetuosity. It was clear that the enemy was determined to storm the fortress at any price. But the undisciplined crowd of Asiatics were unable to stand the grape-shot and always retired. They had good reason to retreat, for although we could occasionally catch sight of how they quickly seized and carried off their killed and wounded, on the following day we found so many dead under our very ramparts, from whence it was impossible for the enemy to carry them away, that they caused a terrible odor under the burning sun, and it is a marvel that no epidemic broke out in the fortress in consequence.

* * *

As soon as all was quiet we made a sortie, mainly directed against a mosque which lay near us, and from which all the attacks of the enemy seemed to have emanated as though it were a fortress. Having assured ourselves that the enemy had retired, we quietly sallied out at night and made straight for that abominable mosque; we quickly got some dry wood together, placed some sticks around it, and set it on fire. We did the same to several huts in our immediate vicinity which we had found specially undesirable. In one of these we

found a Turcoman chestnut horse ; it was decided to present it to me, but I declined the honor and gave it to the men, paying them forty roubles.

Here we also set fire to everything that would burn. We talked in whispers, in the dark. All that could be heard was: "Nikolay Nikolayevitch!" "Vassili Vassilievitch!" "Come here!" It was remarkable that Nazaroff had come out on this expedition in slippers, not so much, I believe, through absent-mindedness as because he was thoroughly calm and indifferent to danger. Was it worth while taking the trouble of putting on boots, when he had already taken them off for the night?

When the tongues of flame showed themselves in the air, we retired ; it was time, indeed. The fire had been noticed, and we could hear excited voices. Apparently the enemy were trying to put it out, but their efforts were of no avail, and the flames only gained on them.

They again commenced an attack on us, but this time with even less success, for the entire neighborhood was lighted up and we could clearly see them coming.

That night our gun and its charming commander, Slujenko, worked wondrous hard ; I went to sleep to the resonant sound of his commands. Provided with boards, we laid ourselves to rest in the sand, in the streets, anywhere, with our muskets by our sides, and, notwithstanding the hardness of my improvised couch, and the terrible number of military fleas, I slept the sleep of the just.

* * *

Long after midnight a loud and continuous noise awoke me. It was the mosque that we had set fire to going to pieces. We went on the ramparts to feast our eyes on the work of our hands ; it was a beautiful night ; the air was charmingly still, and the sky filled with stars. As the sentries were all at their posts and keeping a sharp look out, we again went to sleep after chatting awhile.

With the early morning the attack upon us was resumed. The enemy advanced on the place where we had been the day before, and even as far as the principal entrance to the town. Here at the gates there was also a gun, but in an incomparably more advantageous position than ours, and as it was impossible to enter the fortress except across a

bridge over the moat, a surprise became entirely impossible. If I am not mistaken these gates were called the Djuzak gates ; here Captain Stchemetilo was in command, a thorough Ukrainian and a splendid fellow. To both these places Nazaroff had sent reinforcements on one occasion hen they were in a bad way.

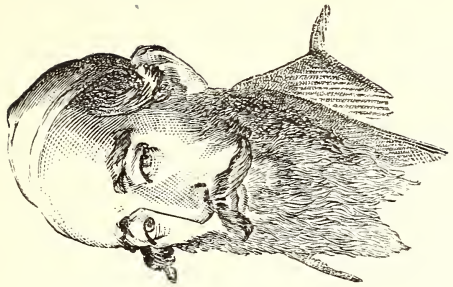
We could see how the attack on the place we had occupied the day before was progressing, how numbers of the enemy at a run and shouting " Ur ! " rose to the ridge and then, after losing a few men, surged back again.

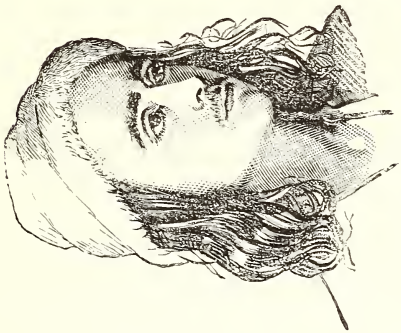
All grew quiet again. Nazaroff got me to join him in eating some "sour-stuff," as he called soup of beet-root, cabbage and bacon, which was provided by our merchants, who had informed us long ago that dinner would be ready whenever we wanted it. He also gave instructions to be called the moment any fresh danger arose.

Our Russian merchants, who had come to Samarcand with a view to opening commercial relations, were of course anything but pleased at finding them participating in such a row. One of them, Trubtchaninoff by name, the representative of the firm of tea merchants, was, however, braver than the rest, and even once joined us on the ramparts in a red shirt and with a fowling-piece in his hand ; but the others shirked it, and as soon as the firing commenced, lighted their candles and fell down on their knees before their " ikons " (holy pictures). As the bullets came through their door they were obliged to change their places of worship from one corner to another, and when a few large shrapnels of the calibre of small shells broke through the roof, they had to change about again.

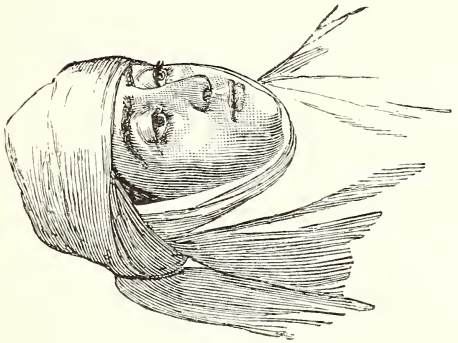
They fed us and gave us to drink, sent the men some vodka, as well as a few boxes of cigars, with which I afterwards made a circuit of the ramparts, distributing the welcome weeds among those who wanted them. They confessed to us that the firing and shouting sounded very terribly in their ears, and made them expect the advent of unwelcome guests at every moment.

Our sick and wounded were put in the throne court, but occasional stray shots from the fortress hit a good many among them and nearly killed the doctor, so that some of them were transferred to huts close to the unfortunate merchants, who were thus completely robbed of any rest they





A FAMILY OF JEWS.



might have had left. The groans of the wounded day and night were heart-rending, so Trubtchaninoff told us.

I found a whole family of Jews on the throne of Tamerlane itself, and I asked Nazaroff whether they had not better be removed from so historically venerable a place, but he was callous to such profanation, and seemed to think that the throne might well be utilized for even baser purposes. Of Jews we had a great number, including children and servants; the sensation of freedom experienced by the advent of the Russians led them to give themselves airs; they commenced wearing sashes instead of ropes round their waists, and to ride on horseback, all of which had been forbidden them before, and they would, therefore, have all been massacred if they had remained in the town. I was told that these Jews when the firing was very severe raised the most frightful hullabaloo, prayed, beat their cheeks and tore the long curls that hung down from their temples. Beside Jews we had Persians, Afghans, Hindoos, and Tartars. All these rushed at us when we came in and asked how the fight was going on, thanked us, and kissed the hems of our garments.

Nazaroff was informed that fresh hordes were assembling and another attack was expected, so we hurried back; but the attack turned out a very poor one, and we took heart again.

As our men did not undress, but lay about on the sand in their clothes, and were nearly eaten up by insects, Nazaroff ordered them off in detachments to bathe in the pond of a mosque. "Wash yourselves well," he added, and then followed a phrase little current in polite society. The men received this order with shouts of laughter, and replied with the regulation "Glad to please you, your honor!"

* * *

Our detachment was now augmented, for as our gates were the most important point, the commandant sent us all the men he could scrape together. Beside convalescents, we had Cossacks and all sorts of irregulars, who cheered loudly enough but got behind the huts when the fighting began. Besides two or three regimental officers, Nazaroff had two officers of sappers with him, Tcherkarsoff and Voronetz, the latter a fat, green youth, who had just left school. As we were all more or less young, the time passed away merrily with jokes and laughter, only to be interrupted

now and again by the news that so-and-so had been killed or wounded. Among others our charming artillery officer, Slujenko, was mortally wounded. I was not present at the time, but Voronetz told me that this brave soldier rode up and down the ramparts in a white tunic and mounted on a black horse, offering an excellent target to the enemy, against which he was accordingly warned. "I saw that he was rather doubled up on his saddle," said Voronetz, "and so I asked him what was the matter, but he did not answer me. When we took him off his horse, we found a bullet in his stomach."

I thought I would take advantage of the comparative calm to try my new acquisition, the Turcoman chestnut, which had been captured during our sortie. But I had not ridden 200 yards when hell seemed set loose. A fresh attack by the enemy was being made, the most desperate of all.

I confided my horse to the custody of the nearest Cossack, and rushed into the fray. The Uzbeks had crept up to the defences along the huts, up to the very gates, and had climbed the walls so quietly that we did not hear the least noise, and then thrown themselves on our guns. Besides bullets, we were saluted from the huts by a perfect hail-storm of stones which had been collected for the purpose.

The first salutation accorded me was a blow from a stone on my left leg. I thought my leg was broken, but it was not. Everybody was cheering, but no one advanced. In the centre I saw Nazaroff, crimson with rage, thrashing the soldiers on the back of their heads with the flat of his sword, urging them on, but they kept shuffling backward. "Tcherkasoff," he shouted, "give it those cowardly beggars!" At such moments thoughts flash through the brain with lightning rapidity. My first impulse was to show the men the way. Then the thought came that I would be sure to get shot, but impulse urged: "Go on; it's all right; you won't get shot yet!" These reflections did not take up as much as two seconds. Before me lay some beams or timber of some sort. Musket in hand, in my unimposing costume, consisting of a gray overcoat flying open, a gray beaver hat on my head, I jumped on these beams, turned to the men, shouted "Follow me, brothers!" and threw myself into an adjoining hut, in the very midst of a horde of the enemy. They at once evacuated the hut and retreated.

I remember well my actions and can correctly analyze them. The first thing I did on entering the hut was to stand in the space between the windows, for the enemy was firing into them, and thus escape their bullets. Nazaroff, who followed me, did the same, having successfully cleared the fatal distance between the ramparts and the hut ; but many of the men who followed suit were lost, some were killed, more wounded, and a few, carried away by the excitement of pursuing the enemy, were taken prisoners and had their heads cut off. One man nearly knocked me down. He was shot in the head and fell against me, completely covering my coat with blood. He gave a groan, and I carried him out, but he died very soon, throwing me a reproachful look which seemed to ask me, "Why did you lure me to my death ?" Those glances of the dying remain engraved on the mind forever.

I remember when General Kaufman visited the wounded after the action of Tchopanata on May 1st, otherwise known as the first battle of Samarcand, which resulted in our taking the town, and how he went up to a young officer dying from a ball in the head. Standing close by I heard the wounded officer answering the kind and sympathetic inquiries of the general quietly and courteously. But when Kaufman told him that the principal work had been done, the enemy routed and the town taken, the wounded man did not reply, but only returned a most peculiar, fierce, evil look !

The enemy retreated, but continued to worry us with continual firing to such an extent that I persuaded Nazaroff to assume the offensive. We jumped over the earthworks, and with a hearty cheer charged the enemy's flank, but turning around to look, I saw that no one was following me. The men were huddled together in a heap, like so many sheep. They kept cheering and firing, but not a man moved. Nazaroff's thrashing them with his sabre was entirely fruitless ; he called them cowards and poltroons, but even that was in vain. In vain I shouted : "Follow me, brothers, follow me !" No one followed me. I was quite hoarse, and my patience exhausted, so I turned to Nazaroff : "They won't move, Nicolay Nicolaievitch ; let us beat a retreat !" The drummer sounded a retreat and we returned. Why did the men refuse to advance ? We were fairly numerous, there were about one hundred and fifty of us, and the

enemy was not in force ; we could see perhaps a few hundred scattered about, evidently retreating ; nevertheless I have a lively recollection how our foremost men slipped behind, and how pain was written on every face. I can only explain it by the supposition that our men were afraid that by leaving the fortress they would be cut off and get lost in the innumerable streets and by-ways. However, the enemy had been completely driven out, and our last sortie had not been without its effect, for the enemy ceased firing.

* * *

I may here mention that in my opinion so-called presentiments of death are merely a mild form of cowardice, excusable and easily understood, which disposes us to expect the worst. If what we were afraid would happen actually occurs, then we say : "I had a presentiment of this." If it does not happen we promptly forget all our fears. A young officer during this action looked at the throng with evident alarm, and sought refuge from the bullets and stones under a neighboring hut. When I got near him, he whispered to me : "I feel that I shall be killed to-day." "What nonsense !" I replied. "You don't believe me? Well, you will see !" I had no time to argue with him, but I remember being struck by the confidence with which he spoke. "Poor fellow," I said to myself, "what a strong presentiment ! Perhaps he will really be killed." But what happened? The young fellow far from being killed was not even wounded !

During the whole of this affair we lost a large number of men. I loaded in heaps two cart loads of bodies. Some were stone dead, others were still breathing, or foaming, the latter being principally those who had taken *vodka* before going into action. We all noticed that our gun did not act any more. Nazaroff made inquiries, and discovered that our brave gunner in charge had succumbed to temptation and prematurely celebrated our victory, the result being that his bleared eyes could not see as straight as before, and that he had jammed in a shell in loading the gun. The tube of the shell had got caught and could not be moved backward or forward. It was lucky that we got out of our scrape as we did ! We were all so tired that no one cared to undertake the removal of the killed and wounded.

The bodies of those soldiers who had pursued the enemy too far, and whose heads had been cut off, were fearful to look at ; their heads had been cut down to the shoulders, so as not to miss, probably, any portion of the trophy. The men stood round these bodies and speculated as to whom they belonged to. It was only by particular marks on their persons, and special distinctions that the men could be identified. It is known that a reward is given for every head of an enemy, generally in the form of clothes, and this custom is not only peculiar to Central Asians, but to Turks, Albanians, Montenegrins, and others as well. This ghastly circumstance suggested a small picture in which I have represented the collection of these severed heads in a sack.

This action cost me my cap, which was shot off my head, and an injury to my musket, which was hit in the barrel close to my breast, so I came off cheaply. Nazaroff came our perfectly whole and untouched. That man's bravery was of a peculiar kind ; the men called him a "dare-devil."

The attacking force came up so close to us that they had even driven a standard into the ground and fastened it to one of the huts, near the gates. It was a large red standard with letters on it, probably the name of Allah. It was difficult to take it down, because the enemy were lodged in the houses in the street opposite, and were firing at us. I determined to haul down this flag which was a disgrace to our fortress, and, notwithstanding Nazaroff's opposition, succeeded in securing it, although the bullets rattled round me while I was unfastening it. I carried my trophy in triumph on its long pole and handed it over to our father, Nazaroff. What did he do with it ? Did he give it to the commandant ? Did he place it in our military church ? Nothing of the kind. To my horror he gave it to his men to make leggings of. When I afterward had occasion to inspect the flags and standards round Kaufman's tent, I did not see any as big or as handsome as this one.

What annoyed me more than anything, however, was to find that my horse, when I went to look for it, was tied up with a rope. This meant, that while I was fighting for my country, one of the Cossacks, probably, who had been driven out to aid us, had stolen my bridle. This I had not expected.

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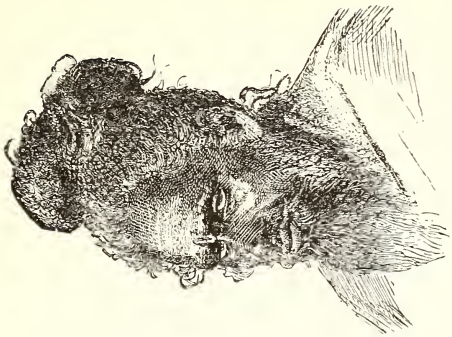
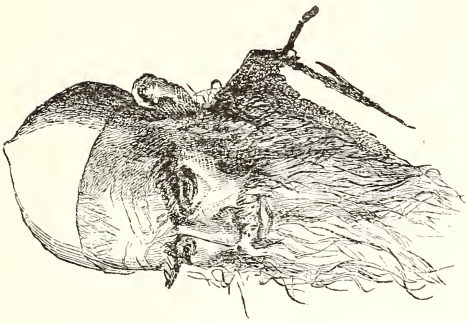
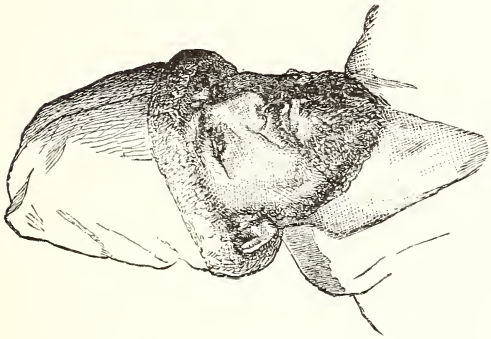


HINDOO FAKIR (*Opium Eater*).



ARAB.



BOHEMIAN.

When all was over, Nazaroff called me to come and have some "sour-stuff" again. When we came into the palace of Tamerlane every one flocked to thank us—Jews, Tartars and Persians, even our own wounded, crawled out to hail Nazaroff. I can imagine how awful the rattle and roar of musketry and cannon must have sounded to them, in momentary dread lest the flood-gates should give way and the deluge swallow them up. Of course at a distance the noise seemed much more terrible than it did to us who were in the thick of it.

Our friends, the merchants, embraced us ; they confessed they had never heard such a din before, and that they had been praying all the time. "You are wounded," said one pointing to the blood-stains on my coat, and I had to explain how a comrade had decorated me with those spots. On looking at my damaged leg, I discovered that blood was running out of a small wound in the ankle. Trubtchaninoff came up quite horrified, and wanted me to see the doctor, but as neither clothes nor linen were torn, it was clear that my wound was a simple bruise, and I was ashamed to say that I had been wounded by a stone.

We went to see Slujenko. I think he recognized us, but could not speak. We were told he was in horrible agony, and a day later he died.

Returning to the gates, we found several officers who had come to obtain particulars of the action. They heard how I had fought without sparing myself, and heartily congratulated me, declaring that I would receive the first cross, thinking thereby to please me. But I strongly protested against it, for I must confess that mixed with a certain amount of vanity which this adulation called forth there was also a strong feeling of disgust. Perhaps the finest moments of my life were experienced during those two days which I passed in a friendship, almost a brotherhood, with people whose energies were all directed toward one common object, recognized by all and dear to all—the defence of the fortress. I can honestly say that the idea of any kind of reward never entered my mind, while our people were reckoning services, tattling over what had been done, and calculating the decorations, and the probabilities of their being bestowed. "Good heavens, spare me, gentlemen !" In my disgust I seized my musket and ran up into the tower near our gates, to see if I could bag a hare or two.

In the evening two officers came to see us from the other gates, to hear how we were getting on. As everything was quiet, I invited them to walk beyond the gates along our *boulevard*—that is, along the street that we had burned down, among the dead. Taking their arms, I led them out beyond the earthworks, Nazaroff, Tcherkarsoff, and the other officers following us. To be candid, the extreme quiet was rather wearisome. Now and then a dog howled, or the fire crackled in a house that was not yet quite destroyed ; the whistling of bullets about a yard from where we were, gave us to understand that we were being watched, and the sound of approaching voices quite convinced us of the wisdom of getting home as quickly as we could, for we had come out unarmed.

As soon as it became quite dark, Nazaroff made another sortie. We burned many more houses that stood along the walls where we had originally taken our stand. When the light of the flames attracted the attention of the besiegers we discreetly retired, without losing a single man.

Nazaroff was again in his slippers and nearly burned his feet, which, however, did not cure him. Comfort was dearer to him than his feet.

* * *

On the following day, the third of the siege, the attacks were less severe, although the firing was not discontinued, sometimes growing very warm, and then again quieting down.

Nazaroff made a sortie a little further into the town, to burn down the whole of the second street around the wall—an elementary precaution which the commander-in-chief should have taken before, but which he had avoided from kindness of heart, not wishing to subject the inhabitants to more privations than he could help ; the result being that we lost a large number of men, and were nearly compelled to evacuate the fortress, the fall of which would have been the signal for a general rising in Central Asia. If a regular space had been cleared all round the fortress, an attack upon it, if not rendered impossible, would at least have been more difficult.

The detachment ordered for the sortie, after leaving a section of officers and men at the Bokhara gates, marched to the Djuzak gates. After firing from the gun and giving a

hearty cheer, Nazaroff jumped like a cat over the ramparts. I followed him and ran ahead, and on arriving at a turning in the first street of shops, I stopped and called others. Before me I could see running in great disorder a large number of people, some of whom turned and fired, but the majority were without muskets, and had nothing but clubs with spiked balls attached to them by chains, and swords. They were all fleeing for their lives. With loud cheers we ran along the streets.

I was rushing on in front, and, carried away by the chase of a couple of fellows, I turned a corner to the right; the fugitives turned to the right again, and I followed them. The first ran into a court-yard, but I overtook the second. He leaned against a corner, and waited for me with his club. I charged him with my bayonet, but his heavily wadded overcoat protected him; he threw himself desperately on the bayonet, warded off the blow, and assaulted me with his weapon. We now set to with our fists. I could find nothing better to do than to beat him about the head. My hands were full of matches for setting fire to the houses; these matches ignited and burned my hand. Finding himself attacked in so primitive a manner, my opponent, a strong fellow with gray hair, took courage, let go his weapon, and proceeded to disarm me. At this juncture the other fellow, who had fled into a court-yard, came to his assistance. I knew that I should be immediately killed, there was no one near, but I shouted with the energy of desperation though without hope of deliverance: "Brothers, to the rescue!" and the men heard me. One of our fellows came running up, his musket at his hip, ready to thrust his bayonet into my adversary, who, however, threw himself upon the soldier and seized his bayonet. The soldier, with an upward jerk, freed the bayonet and thrust it through his opponent's body. I was grateful for this deliverance, and promised the man ten roubles for saving me, but even this lesson did not cure me, and I got into a worse scrape immediately afterward.

There was a fresh cheer, and, chasing the fleeing foe, some of whom had jumped into a shop, I ran after them, again leaving my comrades far behind. Suddenly these fellows set upon me, several of them at once, one of them showering blows upon me, while the others tried to wrest my musket from me. I had only one idea in my mind at the

time : I thought what a disgrace it would be if they took my gun away ! Again my comrades came to the rescue, and killed my adversaries.

From time to time we stopped to set fire to the shops and bazaars. Soon the whole street was in flames, and the smoke obscured everything.

Although here there were nothing but shops, the men behaved remarkably well, and did not even think of plunder. They killed every one who fell in their path, but committed no acts of cruelty. Once only did I see a soldier put his bayonet into a dead man's eye and turn it round so that it gave a peculiar squeak. I was just going to rebuke him for what he had done, when I heard a smack, the resonant sound of a box on the ear, and the voice of Nazaroff saying : " You coward ! pulling a dead man about ! " We proceeded to the Bokhara gates, losing but two or three men, and these only wounded.

On our return we were met by the commandant and several officers He seemed much alarmed at the news that Nazaroff with his handful of men should have risked an attack, but on hearing how small our losses had been, was reassured. We drew ourselves up, I standing at the right wing. Stempel, in the most charming and flattering manner, thanked us for repelling the enemy and for our sortie. I received for my share a few highly flattering words which brought tears to my eyes. It appeared that the gallant Stempel had been told that Nazaroff had made all his men drunk and run away into the town with them. Such news might well alarm any one, and so he had hurried to the spot, and found it was untrue.

My adventures created a good deal of amusement and laughter. The first was told by my rescuer ; the others had not witnessed the combat. " I heard shouts of help," he said, " and ran to the spot, and there I saw Vassili Vassilievitch as white as a sheet, wrestling with an old Sart." The second adventure took place in the open street ; the officers saw it, and chaffed me unmercifully. " Tell us, Vassili Vassilievitch," they said, " how it was that your gun was nearly taken away," or " I say, Vassili Vassilievitch, they called you into the shop, didn't they ? "

I tormented myself with the question why I did not pull out my revolver. I can confess now that I had a small

Smith and Wesson in my pocket, and though it had not a large bore, I could have killed my man with it at so short a distance ; but I had forgotten all about it. But afterward, in the hours when one reviews one's mistakes and faults, I frequently went over every incident of those encounters, and pulled out my revolver and shot it off once or twice, or did as the soldier did, jerked the bayonet out of my adversary's hand and ran him through. Although I consoled myself with the reflection that this was easier for the soldier to do than for me, as I held my opponent with one hand, still I could not forgive myself for my awkwardness, and have only recently soothed my mind on the subject by the reflection that even the simplest thing requires practice.

* * *

It was as before frightfully hot, and towards the end of May. The sun shed its rays with terrible fierceness, and the bodies lying round our gates began to affect the air noticeably. But we had to bear it while we were being continually attacked ; as it had been impossible to leave the fortress without risking the lives of our men. Now that things were getting more quiet, Nazaroff determined to make another sortie for the purpose of burying the dead. We were protected by a chain of skirmishers while engaged in this duty.

The greater portion of this work fell on me, and although I am exceedingly averse to such odors, it made the men so sick they were unable to do the work. Tcherkasoff could stand it but poor Voronetz, after a few attempts, went away with tears in his eyes. There was nothing for it but to plant my bayonet in the corpses and drag them to the ditch. Near the walls lay the carcass of a gray horse that had fallen on the first day during one of the attacks. I saw it then, a fine handsome animal, ridden by some leading officer, who was galloping at the head of a horde up to a shrapnel which blew master and horse to pieces. He was carried away by his men, but the horse was left blown out to extraordinary dimensions. As soon as we moved it from its place the carcass fell to pieces. Then a scene ensued that is difficult to describe. We all collapsed—not literally of course, but we crept off thoroughly nauseated, and as to tackling that carcass again, it seemed impossible. However, a

few men managed to cart it away, and thus get rid of the fragments that lay about.

Among our men, it must be confessed, there were few who advanced cheerfully into certain danger. But, on the other hand, some of them were remarkably brave fellows. For instance, Ivanoff, a muscular, thick-headed, fair fellow, who went everywhere without seeming to know that such a thing as danger existed. Whether he had anything on his mind I am unable to say, but he appeared to be always calm and equable. He went through those days at Samarcand without a scratch, but I was told that he was killed in a later expedition.

Thanks to the awkwardness of this brave fellow, about fifteen or twenty of us, who were in the tower shooting, were very nearly lost. The attacking force were working at something close to the ramparts. We suspected they might be digging a mine under the walls; consequently, as we did not wish to risk the lives of our men by a sortie, we were compelled to throw down a few hand-grenades. Ivanoff undertook to throw them. He climbed onto the beams on the top, and there carried on a whispered conversation with his comrades. "What are you standing there for? Give them to me!" "Take them and go up higher!" "How am I to go up higher? go higher yourself!" "And so I will!" He took a grenade, swung it about, and threw it, but it fell in our midst. We were all transfixed, myself among the number. I then jumped out of the tower and shouted: "Save yourselves, brothers!" All followed my example, Ivanoff among the number, and had just time to get out when a roar was heard, which was all the more terrible for being in so narrow a space. A mass of bricks and stones was lifted and thrown about. Poor Ivanoff caught it from his comrades. He did not know what to do for shame, so I took his part and told them to leave him alone; but a few minutes later I heard them again chaffing him. "So you wanted to kill us all, did you?"

* * *

We learned that on the very first day of the attack the commandant had sent a native orderly to General Kaufman with orders to return with an answer. As he was promised one hundred roubles if he successfully brought back the

message, besides various exemptions, it was surmised that he had been killed, for he did not return, and this was found afterwards to have been the case. Every day Major Serroff sought out reliable men, who undertook for a remuneration to carry to the commander-in-chief news of our unenviable condition. The commandant wrote little notes in German, in which he stated that the attacks did not cease ; that we were beginning to suffer from want of water and salt ; that the number of killed and wounded was large in proportion to the garrison, and that in a word our position was critical. But there was no answer ! Later we discovered that after the fierce attack of the second day the commandant called a council of war, in which it was decided to fight to the last, and that if we were beaten—that is to say if the enemy effected an entrance into the fortress—we were to collect in the court-yard of the Emir's palace, there to fight as long as possible, and then to blow ourselves up ! This was a pretty decision ! Nazaroff, I subsequently learned, was opposed to it, and offered in the event of the fortress being taken from us, to fight his way with the remainder of the garrison to the main body of the army. Although his proposal was not accepted, he told me afterward that he would nevertheless have carried it out on his own responsibility. As for Stempel, this feeble, careworn, charming but taciturn Russian-German, who, by-the-by, could scarcely speak even German, would have carried out the decision of the council, and unhesitatingly dispatched us to that bourne from whence no traveller returns.

We young people knew nothing of all this at the time, and were far from thinking that such bloodthirsty decisions had been arrived at by our commanders. On the third day it was ascertained from information obtained by Serroff that General Kaufman was coming to raise the siege. By way of encouraging the garrison, the commandant informed us of the news, but it contained only a small particle of truth. We afterward learned that the real state of affairs was as follows : None of the orderlies whom we had dispatched to Kaufman actually reached him. They were all caught by the enemy and had their throats cut, notwithstanding that they all went on foot, or more properly speaking, crawled away. Kaufman, however, after defeating the Bokharians at Zera-Bulak, did not push on any further, and this was, as usual,

carried more rapidly than the wind to the ears of the natives at Samarcand, and considerably diminished their courage.

After defeating the Emir, Kaufman called a council of war to consider whether he should push on or return. My friend General Heins strongly advised a march on Bokhara at once and the destruction of the town, from whence terms could be dictated to the Emir. But General Golovatcheff held a contrary opinion. He pointed to the fact that no news had been received from Samarcand, and to the obstinate rumors that the town was in revolt, and that the fortress by some accounts was being stormed, and according to others had already been retaken by the insurgents, assisted by reinforcements from Shah-Risyab's men. General Kaufman, who was himself much concerned at not having heard from us, adopted Golovatcheff's view, and this saved us; for had Kaufman gone on to Bokhara, we should have been unable to hold out. Speaking for myself, one of the most ardent and indefatigable of the defenders of Samarcand, I began to feel too exhausted from the effects of the fierce attack of the second day, and could not help asking myself the question, "Supposing this goes on much longer, have you strength enough to hold out?" And I felt compelled to reply that it was exceedingly doubtful.

It has been truly said that God has given wisdom to babes and sucklings. One general was clever and talented; the other was brave, but had no great qualities nor much intelligence. The first, however, made a mistake, whereas the other discerned rightly. He deserves our gratitude for that, and may God rest his soul, for he died not long ago, and in very straitened circumstances, too.

Notwithstanding the information that the main body of the army was marching to our rescue, the days passed and there was no sign of help arriving. As before, we exchanged shots from morning to night, and now and again attacks were made on us, but they were none of them so desperate as the former ones. We could see that the attacking force was less numerous, but it was not until later that we discovered that Shah-Risyab's forces, dreading the vengeance of Yarim-Padishah, the half Tsar, as they called the governor-general (Kaufman), had been gradually withdrawn.

* * *

Our merchants screwed up their courage to such a height during this period that a whole crowd of them, under the escort of a commissariat officer, appeared on the ramparts, to see and be seen. But alas! their commanding officer, the official, was instantly killed by a bullet, and his whole company at once turned and ran home again, convinced it was wiser to restrain their curiosity for the future.

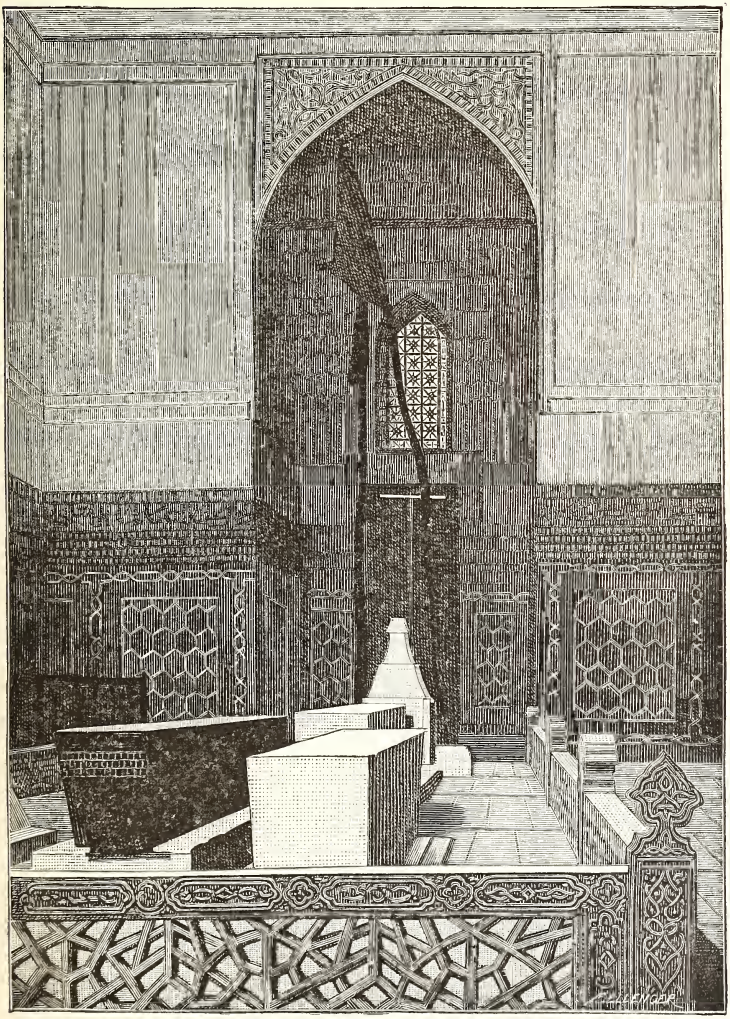
We made no further sorties, for we had lost a very large proportion of our men as it was, and our commandant did not like to risk more lives. Nevertheless, we used to sally out and burn the neighboring houses. Nazaroff burned everything in the vicinity of the Bokhara gates in the direction from which we expected the main body to arrive. In this he was perhaps actuated by a somewhat malicious motive, as he himself confessed he wanted to show the commander-in-chief the precaution he ought to have taken for the security of the fortress before leaving it.

Kaufman, however, beside his many other estimable qualities, was a man of great kindness of heart. He would not allow our men to lay a finger on the inhabitants when he occupied Samarcand, and so he could not of course find it in him to destroy a third of the town round the citadel and leave so many people homeless who had as yet done nothing officially to bring down upon them such a punishment. This is the only explanation possible for his having left the citadel in so defenceless a condition.

We had enough bread; the salt, as already stated, was running short; there was also enough meat, but the horses were badly off for hay, and so we had to organize foraging expeditions, according to the rules of warfare. We sallied out through secret passages under the ramparts, which were generally in the ruins, and lay down in a chain of skirmishers pouring a continual fire into the neighboring gardens, while our fellows mowed a respectable quantity of hay. We then retreated quietly into the fortress, scarcely losing a man.

With the expectation of a speedy release, the officer in charge of our artillery determined to punish the mosque from the minaret of which the enemy had fired on our wounded. The trader, Trubtchaninoff, knowing my weakness for mosques, informed me of this. "Vassili Vassilievitch!" he exclaimed, "they are knocking off the plaster!" This was

his euphemism for the tile-work with which the mosque was decorated, and which he knew I greatly admired. I rushed



TOMB OF TAMERLANE.

off at once and implored the officer to spare the minaret. He acceded to my request, although several shots had already been driven into it.

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On the fifth or sixth day of the siege, a man appeared at the gates waving a piece of paper in his hand. Nazaroff gave orders not to fire, and called him up. A strong, bearded fellow he was, and apparently no coward, for he came right up to our guns. He showed us the manuscript he had brought, but it was in a language we could not understand, and Nazaroff confided him to me to be escorted to the commandant. I took his paper, slung my musket over my shoulder and conducted the messenger, who carried himself with great dignity, to the Emir's court, where our wounded were camped. I bound up his eyes with my handkerchief, and told him in his native language not to be afraid. "I am afraid of nothing," he answered. Putting my hand on his shoulder, I led him to headquarters, where I removed his bandage. Serroff, who knew the native language well, was just at that time with Stempel. He took the paper, read it over, and then commenced swearing at the man. It appeared that he had brought us a proposal of surrender. "You have no chance of rescue," the leaders of the revolt had written; "surrender the fortress, and we will let you go free." "Is that all?" I asked of the colonel. "That is all; you may go!" I returned, and informed our fellows of the nature of the proposal that had been made us, and the very ungracious reception accorded it by our commandant.

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The men had so often heard that they were going to be rescued, that, as no rescue had yet arrived, they recommenced grumbling. "We shall have to winter here," they said. "It is clear they have forgotten all about us." At last, early in the morning of the eighth day, there arrived at the Bokhara gates, from whence we expected the troops, a young native orderly, who had successfully reached General Kaufman, and had returned with an answer. We looked on him as our deliverer, and his uninteresting dirty face, wrapped round with still dirtier rags, seemed to us to be almost inspired. However, he appeared to recognize the importance of

his mission, and beside the pleasure he must have felt at his achievement, the reception of 300 roubles as reward, and of the soldiers' St. George's Cross (if I am not mistaken), must have caused him a still more agreeable sensation. "Hold out," General Kaufman wrote to the commandant, "to-morrow I shall be with you." What a tremendous cheer rang through that fortress when the contents of the letter were made known! Of course the rebels understood that their game was up, and, with the exception of a few desperate characters, they did not annoy us very much more. It appeared afterward that this was the only messenger who succeeded in reaching the main body, which was then already on its way back; the other six or seven had been caught and killed.

The exchange of shots was still kept up as before, and that night the alarm was given and an attack made, but it was evident that our siege had come to an end.

That night the main body of the army, which had halted within an easy distance, could hear our firing. General Kaufman in particular was made very anxious by the shots from our cannon. He told me afterward that he was kept awake all night by fear that the fortress might be taken after all.

* * *

The next day, notwithstanding the entreaties of Nazaroff and the other officers that I should go out to meet the troops, I went into my hut, undressed, and lay down for the first time for eight days between a clean pair of sheets. I tried to get to sleep, but could not; my nerves were at too great a tension. I was lying in a half waking, half sleeping condition, when Nazaroff rushed into my room. "Vassili Vassilievitch!" he shouted, "I have got a fresh battalion; let us go and burn the town!" "I don't want to go," I said. "Won't you?" "No," I repeated. "Well, then I will go alone. Let it be said that Nazaroff burned Samarcand!" Soon an enormous cloud of smoke told us that Nazaroff had not lost any time: he had set fire to the greatest bazaar of Central Asia.

The tender-hearted Kaufman, who felt that a severe example should be made of the insurgents, had intentionally passed the previous nights a few miles off from Samarcand, so as to give the inhabitants time to escape, especially the women and children. But now he gave orders that the town should be exemplarily punished, and that no one should be

spared. A commissariat officer, who was one of the volunteer avengers, told me the following incident: He ran into a hut with a few soldiers and came upon an old woman, who received them with the words, "Ahman! ahman!" (good health). "We saw," he said, "that the sacks upon which she was sitting were moving. We looked, and found a boy of about sixteen. He was dragged out and killed, and his old grandmother, too!"

The soldiers were allowed to inspect the shops, and what wonderful things they brought away with them! It was most mirth-provoking to see them arrayed in all the gorgeousness of native dresses, which they selected at random, vying with each other as to who should wear the most glaring colors. For a few roubles a perfect ethnographical treasure could have been purchased from them. As for the wealth of old work, carved doors, and columns that must have perished in the flames, I feel miserable when I think of it.

Nazaroff diverted himself by paying the town with usury for all the discomforts and trouble it had given him during those eight days. He especially vented his spite against the mosque of Shirdari with the minaret, from which such good aim had been taken at our wounded, and our artillery park. "I have killed every one in that infernal mosque," he said proudly. As I knew the mollah of that mosque, whom I confess I secretly suspected of aiding and abetting the killing of our wounded men, but in whose fate I took a great interest, I asked one of the officers who had assisted Nazaroff in this butchering expedition, whether he had found many people in the mosque. "No, not many," he replied, "the cowards ran away!" I breathed again. "Only one old mollah was caught," he continued. "Would you believe it, he ran like a cat up to the very top of the minaret."—"Well?"—"Well, of course they threw him down from there with bayonets." Uff!

* * *

I can still picture in my mind's eye the figure of General Kaufman sitting in our court-yard dealing out, after all that preceded, justice and punishment to all sorts of people who been taken prisoners for carrying arms or other nefarious practices. The General, surrounded by his officers, was sitting on a camp-stool smoking a cigarette, and was pronounc-

ing in a tranquil dispassionate voice his sentences. "Shoot him, shoot him." I accidentally stopped to watch the process, and I saw among those who were brought up, my friend the messenger, who had come up to the gates with the conditions of surrender. "Is it possible that even he is going to be shot?" I asked General Heins, who was standing close by. "I know this man to be a brave and decent fellow?" "Tell General Kaufman," he said, "he will perhaps let him off for your sake." My ill-fate bade me apply to the commandant before appealing to the General. "Major, why are they going to punish this messenger? You will remember that he behaved remarkably well." "On the contrary, he was insolent. You will allow me to know my own business." I saw that my interference was distasteful to Stempel, and went away, thinking that one more or less did not signify. The messenger had in the mean time received the fatal sentence, "Shoot him," which he probably understood, for it brought the perspiration to his brow. On leaving the court-yard the poor fellow asked for something to drink. They give him some water which he gulped down; he wiped his mouth with his robe, and then marched away submissively toward the road which leads to the land "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

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RUSSO-TURKISH WAR.

II.

ON THE DANUBE,

1877.

My good friend General Hall introduced me to Generals Nepokoitchitski, Levitski, and others; and also, to my great astonishment, to General Skobeleff the younger. "I knew a Skobeleff in Turkestan," said I. "I am he." "Is it possible you have aged so much? We are old acquaintances, then." Skobeleff had, in fact, changed very much; he had acquired a more manly appearance, and had adopted the bearing of a general, and to some extent a general's authoritative tone. In talking to me, however, he soon fell into the old friendly manner. He had just arrived. The two Crosses of the Order of St. George which he had won in Turkestan were the subjects of many witticisms, and some one said that he must now show that he deserved them. This phrase, I remember, met with general approval and passed from mouth to mouth, as did also the assertion that the boyish Skobeleff could not be trusted with even a company of soldiers. When Skobeleff heard that I was going with his father, he bade me tell him that his son would soon join him. He had been appointed chief of staff to his father, Dmitri Ivanovitch Skobeleff, who was in command of the advance guard,—an appointment which was an intentional disgrace, considering his rank.

* * *

The detachment commanded by the elder Skobeleff was composed of two brigades, the first of which consisted of a regiment of Don Cossacks and a regiment of Kuban Cossacks, while the second was made up of Vladicaucasians, Ossetes, and Ingushes. The first brigade was commanded by Colonel Tutolmin, a prudent and excellent man, but excessively fond of the sound of his own voice; the second by Colonel Wulfert,

who had been made Knight of the Order of St. George for his distinguished services in the storming of Tashkend. Wulfert was as silent as Tutolmin was loquacious.

The following were the officers in command of the several regiments :—Of the Don Cossacks, Denis Orloff, a lively, sympathetic fellow and a good comrade ; of the Kuban Cossacks, Kucharenko (son of the General Kucharenko, who is well known in the Caucasus), an officer who had all the look of a bold Caucasian, though, as it turned out, he was in a bad state of health ; of the Vladicaucasians, Colonel Levis—half Russian, half Swede—a stout, florid, good-humored, and brave soldier—a typical military man, in short ; of the Ingushes and Ossetes, an officer who was Russian in appearance and in name—Pankratieff, if I remember rightly.

I usually lodged in some peasant's house with the elder Skobeleff. He possessed a two-wheeled *tarataika* (small cart) and a couple of horses. In the morning, after the troops had started, we drove after them ; when he had caught them up, Skobeleff put on his huge *papakha* (Cossack cap), mounted a horse, rode round the regiments, greeting the officers and men, and then took his seat again in the tarataika, laid the papakha under the seat, and put on once more his red convoy-cap. He had years ago commanded the imperial convoy, and still wore the convoy uniform. When we came near a village he never forgot to throw *open* the flaps of his overcoat so as to show his smart *tcherkesska* embroidered with broad silver lace. The Roumanians were everywhere much impressed with the general's stately and characteristic appearance. I remember well how at a review which the commander-in-chief held at Galatz Skobeleff's splendid figure filled me with admiration. He was a handsome man, with great blue eyes and a full red beard, and sat his little horse as if it were a part of him.

* * *

On the way we told each other stories, or Skobeleff talked with Mishka, the coachman, about the bad shoeing of the near horse, or the rottenness of the reins, or the bad state of one of the tires, etc. Generally he would wrangle, scold the coachman, and threaten to send him away, and after we had crossed the frontier he would promise him a sound thrashing " now that the ordinary law was no longer

in force." But Mishka knew well enough that these were but idle threats. Later on, when the younger Skobeleff, Michael, had joined our party, it was often difficult to determine which the elder Skobeleff was speaking of or which he was calling—his son Misha, or his coachman Mishka.

We ordinarily drove far ahead of the troops and chose a good place for the midday halt ; here we would await them, trying in the interim to discover if there were a house or an inn near us at which to procure milk, fresh or sour. When the officers came up, we would take a cold breakfast.

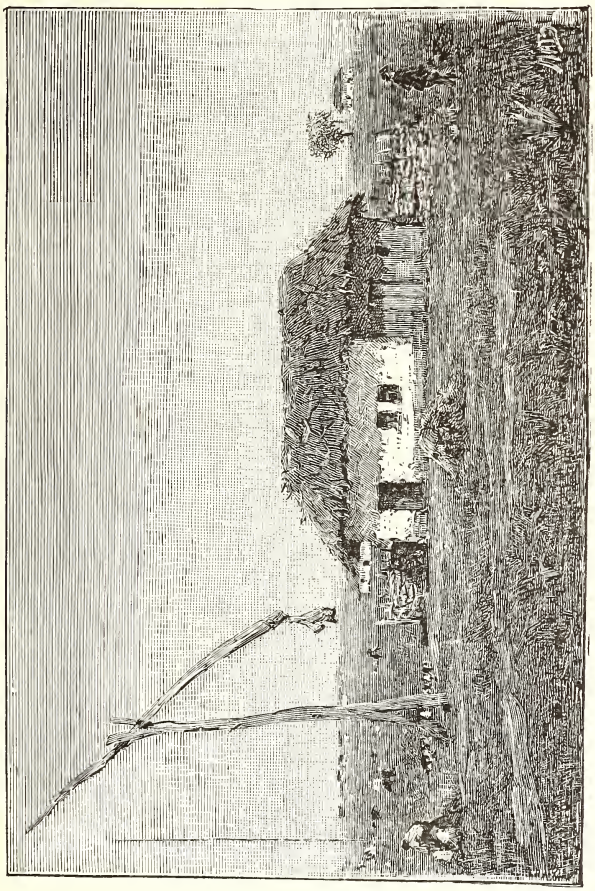
I must mention still a few more persons who were generally of our party. These were Staff-Captain Sacharoff, who was now acting as chief of staff to this detachment—a very clever fellow ; Captain Derfelden, a cavalry officer serving with our detachment, who, in spite of his German name, was a true Russian ; and, lastly, Captain Lukasheff, of the Gatshina Cuirassiers, who, if I remember aright, was temporarily acting as aide-de-camp.

The detachment included, beside the troops already mentioned, a battery of Don Cossack artillery ; but their commander kept aloof from us and associated only with his own officers. The officers commanding the regiments of the second brigade, as well as Wulfert himself, were seldom with us, as they marched behind, and only appeared in Skobeleff's presence when they overtook us every other day during our midday halt.

It is scarcely necessary to say that our breakfast parties in a meadow, under shady trees or under the projecting roof of a Roumanian cottage, were very animated and merry. When we had rested, the signal would be given to resume our march, and we would mount our *tarataika* once more and set off, followed by the detachment.

Often we would ask questions of the peasants, male or female, whom we met on the road ; and our efforts to make ourselves understood on these occasions gave us no little amusement. "You can't manage it," Skobeleff would say ; "let me question him." Sometimes he did actually succeed in getting an answer. Once we turned off the road to speak to a Roumanian who was minding a flock of sheep, and who was almost frightened out of his wits at sight of the general. Skobeleff wanted to buy a small sheep for breeding. He

stretched out his hands and bleated feebly. The peasant understood what he wanted, sold him the sheep, and looked after us, smilingly, for a long while. We took the animal



A ROUMANIAN COTTAGE.

into our vehicle, but presently had to banish him to the baggage-wagons, as he was too dirty to be a pleasant travelling-companion.

* * *

On the arrival of the detachment at the place where, according to our marching orders, we were to halt for the night, dinner was prepared in the house which the general chose for his quarters. We had agreed among ourselves that Skobeleff should provide the substantial viands, Tutolmin the wine, Sacharoff the tea and sugar, and I the requisite sweets—such, for instance, as almonds and raisins, nuts, etc. Skobeleff always dressed the salad himself, and, as he constantly tasted it, his beard would become covered with green leaves.

He used often to send out his cook to one of the neighboring gardens to steal young vine-leaves to put into the soup.

When, for some reason or other, we were kept waiting for dinner, we tried to kill time with all kinds of absurdities and jokes. We indited odes to the cook on the dinner, or, according to circumstances, on the campaign, the weather, etc. I still recollect some verses which General Skobeleff, Colonel Tutolmin, Captain Sacharoff, and Captain Derfelden composed jointly.

My doggerel lines remained unfinished, because Dmitri Ivanovitch (the elder Skobeleff) begged me to add something on the order and discipline of the detachment, which naturally rather cooled my inspiration. My verses ran as follows:

Jests and laughter fill the air,
And songs in chorus shouted.
All's alive and merry,
  All's alive and merry.

'Tis Skobeleff with his battalions
And his Don Cossacks,
Marching 'gainst the Turks,
  Marching 'gainst the Turks.

Here they tramp, the brave Kubantsi
And the ragged Ossetin
Men of mettle all,
  Men of mettle all.

Here the guns come lumbering:
In battle perhaps they'll help us.
But who can prophesy?
  But who can prophesy?

In the rear the hangers-on,
Surgeons, clerks, and Lord knows who,
In a motley throng,
In a motley throng.

The proposal to continue these verses was not carried out. After dinner, until tea was brought, there was more chatting and joking, and often songs, in which the general did not disdain to join with his bass voice. Tutolmin especially was fond of singing; he would hold some of the notes with care, often closing his eyes with pleasure, particularly when his favorite song was sung—the soldiers' air:

Live and drive dull care away,
And be thankful to the Czar:

or—

Let us live and banish care
And swear eternal friendship.

We went to bed in good time, as we had to be up early.

* * *

At one halting-place we had just lain down to sleep when shots were heard, and a general tumult ensued. While dressing myself I asked Skobeleff what it could be. "The Turks," he thought. In a few minutes the whole detachment was on the move; unfortunately my bridle had been lost, which made me later than the others in starting. In the impenetrable darkness I rode through hedges and ditches, and in consequence nearly fell from my horse. When I reached the division, already ranged in rank and file, I heard orders given in an undertone: "Where is the artillery? Let the artillery come here. The Kubantsi to the right." Then the general's voice reached me: "Vassili Vassilievitch! Where is Vassili Vassilievitch?" I quickly took my place among the staff.

A patrol was sent out, and it was found that a Jewish sutler who was taking his night's rest here, and had become thoroughly frightened in the dark, had taken it into his head to fire a few shots from his revolver in order to restore his courage. The Cossacks, especially Orloff, begged for permission to give this Jew, who had deprived the whole detachment of sleep, a sound beating; but I interposed on his behalf, and suggested

that for each shot fired he should receive a cut with the *nagaika*. This was done. The Jew received three lashes only, but they were good ones.

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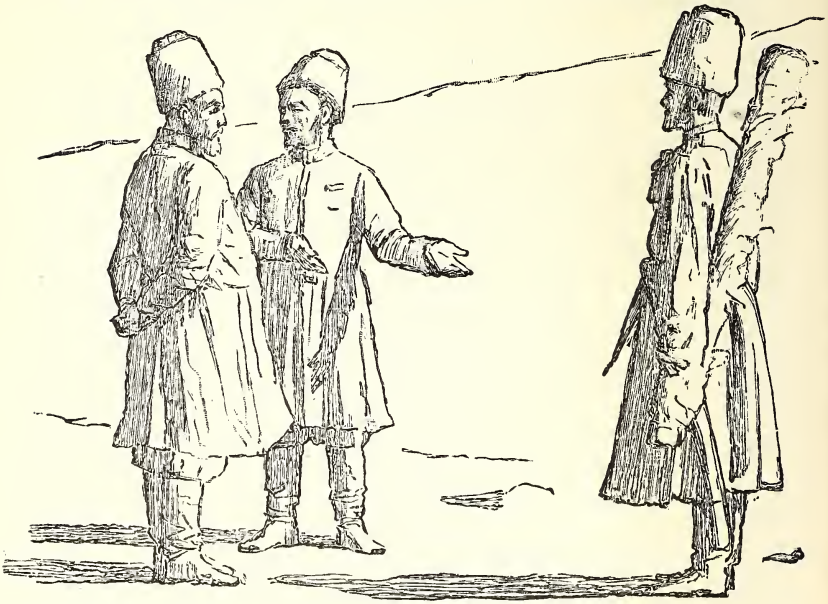
In the large villages the Cossacks were quartered in houses, but in the intervening country in tents. On the whole the troops behaved well, though there were some complaints against them : in one place a Cossack had carried off a goose ; in another a sheep had been stolen, and consumed with such skill that neither skin nor bones were to be found. Complaints were also brought, but only once, of a woman being attacked by Cossacks.

We marched on with great caution, as if in an enemy's country, with patrols, which Skobeleff called "eyes," on our flanks. Although some of the officers laughed at these precautions, they were probably not unnecessary ; for one could not be sure that some wandering party of Tcherkesses might



HE ATTACKED A WOMAN.

not cross the Danube on a dark night, do mischief, and alarm the neighborhood. Although we were still quite a distance from the Danube, the inhabitants all round us were in the greatest excitement in consequence of the constant rumors that the enemy were about to cross the river—now at this spot and now at that.

The officers, as well as the Cossacks of the detachment, led a quiet life ; there was neither hard drinking nor high play. The only thing I can remember is a little entertainment given by the colonel of the Kuban regiment, Kucharenko, who celebrated his birthday with a feast. Colonel Orloff appeared with a half-dozen of Don champagne—the last, as he assured us ; presently another half-dozen appeared, which was said to be quite the last ; however, yet another half-dozen followed ; was it really (?) the last.

The chief interest of the feast was centred in the roast foal, of which notice had been given long before. Although in Turkestan I had eaten horse-flesh, I had never tasted foal.

The roast was served. " Gentlemen," cried Kucharenko, who stammered violently, " will you be pleased to partake of roast foal ? "—the dish contained huge chops and steaks of rather bluish meat. All tried it. I liked the meat, the majority did not ; some ate a little, others none at all.

Now the second dish was served. "Gentlemen, here is mutton for those who do not care for roast foal ! " The guests fell to, and were heard to exclaim : " That is quite a different thing ; this is real meat ! " When all had laid down their knives and forks, Kucharenko stammered out again : " Do not be angry, gentlemen : both dishes were foal ! "

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I possessed neither horse nor carriage, and was therefore obliged to provide myself with both. It was settled that Sotnik W., who commanded a *sotnia* (hundred) of Kuban Cossacks, and always knew how to get everything everywhere, should procure me both. The general introduced me to him. " All right," said W. ; and the very next day I received a chestnut horse, which, to be sure, was blind of one eye, but good-tempered and quiet, could see well with the sound eye, and (most important of all) cost only seventy rubles—not a high price under the circumstances.

Later on, at Bucharest, W. procured for me a new horse and a carriage from a Russian settler, a Skopets, for 400 francs. For my carriage Skobeleff gave me a Cossack foot-soldier from the Don, called Ivan, and for my horses a young Ossetin named Kaitoff.

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Shortly after this the younger Skobeleff arrived. His horses had preceded him. One, which his father had given him, was an English thoroughbred, for which 14,000 rubles had been paid ; the second, a white stallion of Persian race, had, I suppose, some good points, but in most respects was not well formed ; the third, a yellow chestnut of Turcoman blood from Khiva, did not seem to be one of the best horses of that country.

The young general had been already talked of in the division, and I, being acquainted with him, was often questioned about him. I told everybody that he was a brave and excellent officer.

The relation between the elder Skobeleff and his son was a friendly one ; but it seemed to me, nevertheless, that Dmitri Ivanovitch was a little piqued that his son had received the Cross of St. George of the third class while he had only the fourth. Moreover, the father alluded sarcastically to his son Michel's military service in Turkestan (partly, no doubt, because he was himself an old Caucasian), and laughed at the engagements there as child's play. Once, at table I was obliged to stand up warmly for the young general, and the old man was quite annoyed. Altogether, it must be confessed that young Skobeleff to a certain extent disturbed the orderly patriarchal conditions of our camp life by his martial stories and his plans and proposals for the coming campaign.

He had at that time a number of plans ready, not only for taking the whole army and its several divisions across the Danube, but also for surprising the Turkish pickets, batteries, etc. He communicated his plans in confidence first to one and then to another of the older officers of the detachment, to the great astonishment of many. "He is mad," said S. to me ; "a fresh plan every hour. He takes one by the arm, with 'I say, do you know'—and begins to talk sheer nonsense."

As I was sincerely attached to Skobeleff, I advised him to

be more reserved and cautious. He asked with much interest what impression he had made on the detachment. I replied that his youth and figure, his Cross of St. George, and other points had undoubtedly made a certain impression; but that he must take care not to efface it by his schemes, which, however practicable and easy of execution they might appear to him personally, bored everybody else. Skobeleff thanked me warmly, saying, "That is the advice of a true friend."

* * *

We came within a short distance of Bucharest, but did not enter the town, on account of the agreement which had been made at the convention.

Our former agent in Constantinople, Colonel Bobrikoff, accompanied by several Roumanian officers, rode out from the town to meet us; they led us round through the suburbs, and in one of these, by the Danube, we took up our quarters. This proceeding caused great discontent in the detachment; the condition that we should not march through the town was termed humiliating, but quite unjustly.

When the troops had been billeted, the elder Skobeleff was informed that the commander-in-chief had stopped at Bucharest on his way and was lodging in the house of Consul Stuart. The worthy Dmitri Ivanovitch was highly delighted at this news, and as he sat on the bed threw his legs up in the air. Presently he rode off to the Grand Duke displaying the flag, of blue silk with a large white cross, which was carried before the detachment on the march through Roumania.

Accompanied by young Skobeleff, I drove through the town. I must confess that I was ashamed of my companion, for he put out his tongue at the ladies we met, particularly at the pretty ones.

Skobeleff felt his inaction painfully. It was evident that a separate command was not to be intrusted to him, and he deeply regretted having left Turkestan, where, it was rumored, a demonstration against England was preparing. The thought of a campaign in India gave him no peace. "We were both fools to come here," he said to Captain Masloff, who had come with him from Turkestan, and, like him, was longing to be back. I advised Michael Dmitrie-

vitch to have a little patience, whereupon he replied "Let us wait, Vassili Vassilievitch. I understand waiting, and shall be sure to take what comes to me." Masloff I advised to join fortunes with Skobeleff, who, it was certain, would find his right place. It is a pity that he succeeded in doing so too late, that his youth was so long a stumbling block, and that this fiery spirit was not allowed free scope. The result of the campaign would then have been very different.

The elder Skobeleff gave us a dinner in the Huk Hotel, where I also had taken rooms. The inn was good and not expensive, and drove a roaring trade, it was said. But, indeed, there was scarcely a person in Bucharest who did not, somehow or other, get profit from us Russians. The owners of inns and hotels must really have made their fortunes.

* * *

As I had to provide the sweets for our common table, I ransacked all the shops in the town, but could find nothing except some inferior raisins and hard dried plums; everything else was sold out. It was much to my annoyance that I had to offer my good comrades these rather untempting articles.

After two days' rest we marched on in our old order. One day the Don Cossacks led the van, the next day the Kubantsi, for the most part singing and playing Cossack music, which, if not always harmonious, sounded at any rate loud and bold. I remember one officer in particular who conducted the music in the Kuban regiment—a fine, well-built, handsome man. As he conducted he beat a Turkish drum; and how he did beat it! One could only listen to it at a respectful distance. The troops were disposed of as before—partly in cottages, if there was room; if not, in tents as near as possible to the water. For ourselves, we always found some house—now a peasant's, now a landowner's. I sometimes went with Dmitri Ivanovitch to the farms by the way, where, if the owner was absent, they willingly showed us everything, and offered us *dultchas—i.e.* fruit-syrup—with the usual glass of water. Once we lodged in a large, very roomy house belonging to a landowner. But that night our detachment did not fare well; though they searched carefully, no dry place could be found, and the Cossacks were obliged to pitch their tents on swampy ground; moreover, the weather was damp and cold; rain fell the whole time. I

remember that our commanding officer was then accused of making his troops encamp too near his own quarters.

While there, the elder Skobeleff received orders to appear at headquarters, and, evidently uneasy, he set off. The fact was, that during our stay at Bucharest the Ingushes belonging to our detachment had had a fight—such, at least, was the story—and officious people thereupon reported in influential quarters that the Mussulmans among the Ingushes, and some of those among the Ossetes, had expressed their dislike of the campaign; nay, these busybodies actually pretended that they had seen the so-called malcontents throw away their cartridges, saying that they would not fire on their fellow-believers, the Turks.

All this proved later to be mere nonsense, but gossip did not fail to spread the report that there was a want of discipline in the detachment, and even went so far as to hint that it was almost in a state of mutiny. The commander-in-chief, disquieted by these rumors, summoned Skobeleff, on whose advice it was decided to send back the Ingushes and the Ossetes to Russia. A harsher and, under the circumstances, a more unjust measure could scarcely be imagined; and these rough soldiers shed tears as they tried to move their commanders from their purpose and to establish their own innocence; but all in vain, for their return to Russia was definitely decided upon. They were obliged to start for Odessa on their way home, returning afterward to the seat of war.

During Skobeleff's absence his son took his place. How pleased he was to be able to ride along the ranks of the Cossacks and call out to them, "Good-day, children!" Even at that time, when I dissuaded him from attempting to obtain permission to return to Turkestan, he said to me sadly, "Do you think Vassili Vassilievitch, that I do not find it hard to be unable to greet the men, when I have led regiments into battle, and governed a province?"

The Cossacks recognized the difference between father and son; you might hear them say, "We could do with a commander like that." When the elder Skobeleff learned this, later, he was annoyed. "He cannot have this post," he said to me, "because I have it." The old man was called Pasha —I do not know why; Sacharoff called him Rygun Pasha, because he often hemmed loudly to clear his throat. The

Cossacks frequently sang a parody of the well-known soldiers' song, "There was a battle at Poltava," which began with the words "At Junis was a battle fought," in allusion to the Russian volunteers in the war between Turkey and Servia. Among the rest the following lines—

Our mighty Emperor—
God keep his memory—

were parodied as follows:—

Our mighty M . . .—
May the devil take him—
Only in the rear was seen,
Writing telegrams.

The elder Skobeleff heard this song often without taking any notice of it; but the younger, on the very first day of his short command, said to the men, "I beg of you, brethren, not to sing that song, because it ridicules our brothers who fought bravely for the cause of the Slav."

He made inquiries about the men's food and about various other matters concerning the detachment: and this, becoming speedily known to the privates, procured for him great popularity.

In everything that related to the health of the troops the elder Skobeleff trusted completely to the integrity of the brigadier-generals, who in turn relied on the colonels of the regiments; and the result was that in reality there was no control whatever. An active young doctor reported that the regiment commanded by K. was insufficiently provided with medical appliances, and that in addition the food was bad. The officer in command of the division acted in an extremely autocratic and original fashion, for he questioned the colonel of the regiment, and in consequence removed the doctor from his post, ascribing his damaging statement to his personal dislike for his colonel.

"What a mean fellow that doctor is!" said the colonel to me. "When he came into the regiment, he had nothing; I gave him a Cossack, I gave him a horse, and one thing and another; and now just see how he repays me."

* * *

We soon reached Frateshti, near the railway station of the same name, whence there is a view of the Danube glittering like a silver band in the sunshine. As the detachment was to take a position along the bank of the river, and there was no talk of crossing, I thought I would seize the opportunity to go to Paris for a short time. Some of my painting materials had suffered severely on the way, so that it was necessary either to send for new ones or to go myself. I preferred the latter, told Skobeleff of my intention, and set off the same day, *viâ* Bucharest, for Ploieshti, which was then our headquarters.

* * *

Twenty days later I was back again. There was a great deal going on at headquarters then, because the Emperor was with the army. In the evening of the same day I went to Giurgevo, where Skobeleff was stationed with his division. The next morning the thunder of cannon awoke me, and a Cossack brought me the following message by order of the commanding officer : " The Turks are bombarding Giurgevo. Come and look."

I rode down to the bank of the Danube. The day was fine and bright, and Rustchuk, with its forts, its white minarets, and the distant camp, lay before me as if in the palm of my hand. The elder Skobeleff with his staff sat under the projecting roof of a house which overhung the river. The Turks, as it turned out, were bombarding, not the town, but the trading-vessels which lay between the shore and a little island, and which they thought were intended to take our troops across. They were strangely built barks, reminding one of the last century ; and any one who believed that the Russian troops proposed to make their way to the Turkish shore in these galleys must have had a very poor opinion of our facilities for crossing the Danube.

Several shells had already fallen among the houses on the extreme edge of the town, and the confusion which followed was a sight to see : the inhabitants snatching up the most indispensable of their belongings and flying to the other side of the town. I went on board the vessels, and took my station on the middle one in order to observe on the one side the hurly-burly in the houses, and on the other the falling of the bombs into the water. Just at that moment a shell fell into

a long government building, which was probably some kind of magazine, but at that time served as quarters for half a sotnia of Kuban Cossacks; a second followed immediately. When the first shell struck the wall, the Cossacks began to collect their things; but when the second broke through the roof, they crept out like cockroaches, hanging their heads, and, with dagger in one hand and cap in the other, ran quickly into the streets, hugging the walls as they went.

Some of the shells, plunging into the sandy shore and there bursting, threw up the sand as if by magic in the form of a bouquet or a cauliflower head, from the centre of which solid clods and stones flew into the air, while above it rose a thick column of white smoke.

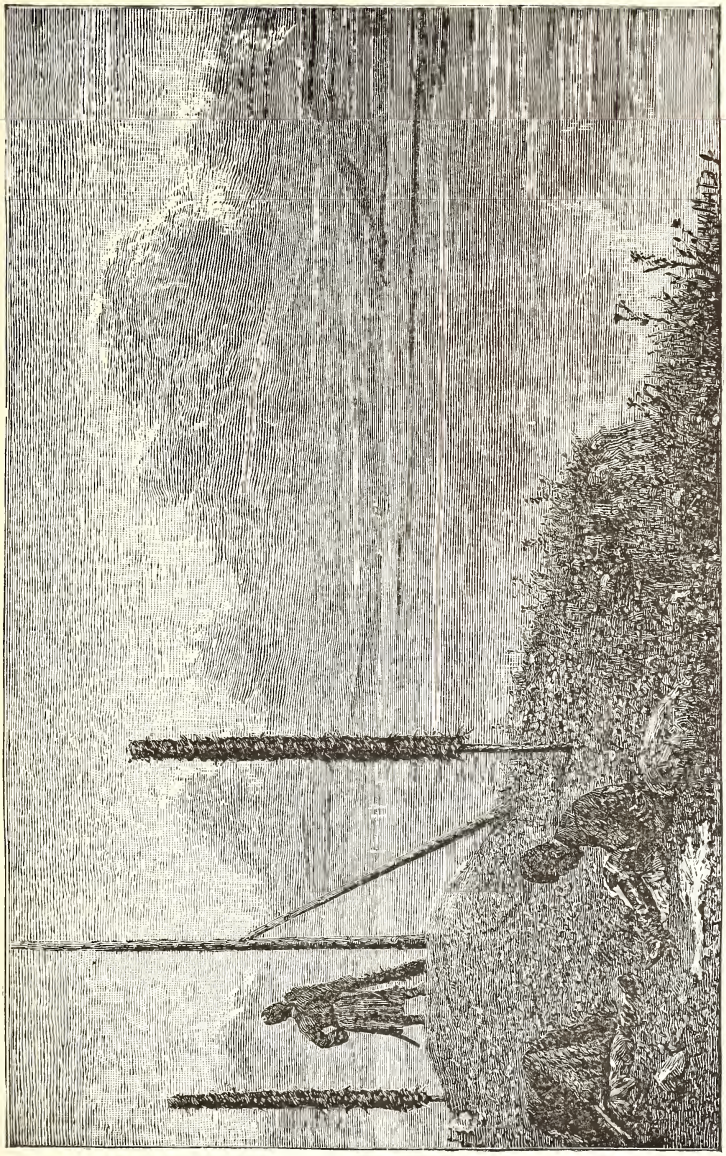
The shells fell near the spot where I was; a few only reached the shore—most of them fell on the ships, or into the water between or in front of them. Twice the bark on which I stood was struck. The first shot struck the bows; the second pierced the hull and turned everything between-decks upside down. The explosion was so violent that I cannot call it anything but hellish, though my knowledge of hell does not rest on personal experience. The crash, I remember, drove two puppies on deck, where they began to play; the explosion merely startled them and made them prick up their ears, and then they set at each other again.

It was most interesting to see how the bombs fell into the water and made fountains rise high into the air. Each time the smoke rose I felt rather queer, and thought, "Now the place where you are standing will be struck; you will be thrown down and hurled into the water, and no one will know what has become of you."

The Turks threw fifty shells and then ceased. The result of this bombardment was very trifling.

"And where were you?" I was asked; "how could you miss such an interesting performance, done gratis, too?" "Oh, I saw it better than you, for I was on that ship the whole time." "Impossible!" they all cried with one accord. "Let us go and see what havoc they have made," said Skobeleff. We went on board all the vessels, saw what damage had been done, but could not find the dogs. Had they got frightened and crept away to hide themselves, or had they been hurled into the water?

I did not get many compliments for having made my ob-



PICKET ON THE DANUBE.

servations from the ship. Some simply refused to believe that I had placed myself in the middle of the target; others called it useless bravado; it did not occur to any one that these very observations were the object of my stay. If I had brought a paint box with me, I should have painted some explosions.

* * *

The detachment placed pickets along the Danube for a great distance. On the left flank, in Malorosh, were stationed Orloff's Don Cossacks; in the centre, stretching as far as the village of Mali-Dijos, the Kuban Cossacks; and beyond them, reaching to the village of Petroshain, the Ossetes. I first rode to the Don Cossacks at Malorosh, who had built themselves a model watch-tower. The Turks, enraged at this, fired upon the Cossacks, which Orloff did not like at all. The shells falling among the horses, terrified them and drove them away, so that it was difficult to find them again. The Cossacks made an attempt to reply with their little field guns, but soon had to give it up in order not to disgrace themselves.

* * *

Batteries were being erected close by Giurgevo, and I went with the two Skobeleffs to look at the works. The elder Skobeleff observed to the engineer officer that he was making the boarding of the platform much too thin. The rather dandified young officer who was doing the honors replied: "It is thick enough for the Turks, your Excellency." A little further from the town, at the first village, Slobodsei, another battery was being erected, of siege-guns, apparently, which were to carry nine versts. There the energetic Colonel Pliutchinski was at work.

* * *

The little town of Giurgevo had undergone no change, except that here and there greater activity than usual prevailed. Certainly many of the inhabitants had been frightened away by the bombardment and the houses on the shore in particular stood empty; but within the town, in the squares and streets, there were great throngs of people, and trade was brisk. The hotels and inns were filled with officers carousing—some alone and some in groups, some with women

and some without them ; and their merriment was not always restrained within the limits of propriety. One evening, when I entered an inn with S. and other officers to have supper, we found a half-drunken company there, who had taken off sabres and caps, some even their tunics, and had put them on the girls who were drinking with them. And all this took place in the public room !

The younger officers of our detachment—the above-mentioned S., L., and others—frequented a certain garden, to which they were attracted by the charms of the damsels who sang and played the harp there, and made Skobeleff so eager by their account of the pleasures of the entertainment, that the old man, who feared to compromise himself by visiting the place openly, decided to take a peep secretly. He was once seen stealing along by the garden and looking through a hole in the fence, which exploit brought upon him well-merited raillery.

* * *

At Bucharest, through M. D. Skobeleff, I had become acquainted with MacGahan, the well-known correspondent of the *Daily News ;* later, at Giurgevo, I met Mr. Forbes, when he came with some communication to the staff of the detachment. I was the only one there who could speak English, and therefore acted as interpreter, endeavoring at the same time to soften the excessive coldness with which he was received and his questions answered. In order to escape reproaches for my indulgence to the "deceitful English," I avoided entering into conversation with Mr. Forbes in our casual meetings. I must confess that I did not find it easy, as one could see that he felt the general mistrust entertained toward him as an Englishman, and exerted himself to be pleasant.

* * *

The officer in command of the division lived in a little house on the river bank, where we met every day at dinner. Here we were joined by Prince Tserteleff, formerly secretary to the ambassador at Constantinople, who had entered the Kuban regiment as a subaltern (uriadnik), and was now serving in Skobeleff's detachment. The younger Skobeleff, who was chief of the staff of the detachment, rarely associated

with us; but he passed most of his time at Bucharest, whither he was chiefly attracted by the women of all nationalities who gathered there from every part of Europe. The feasting and carousing in that town were a sight to see. From the ensign who for the first time had three hundred roubles in his pocket to the commissariat official who threw away his thousands, all showed their Slav nature ; all rioted, and ate and drank, but especially drank. Michael Skobeleff at this time had not a farthing in his pocket ; so that he was ready to take anything he could get ; from his father especially, who was not exactly generous, he tried to squeeze money. Once, when Skobeleff asked his father for money, the latter sent him four gold pieces. The son was beside himself. "Why, I give every lackey a larger present than that!" he cried indignantly. During that gay time, in fact, the largest sum would scarcely have been enough for him.

* * *

I used often to walk with the elder Skobeleff in the avenues on the boulevards. "Let us see how a spy is disposed of," he said one day. We sat down on a bench opposite a house into which Colonel Parentsoff and the aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief had gone. In front of the steps stood soldiers, two to the left and two to the right. We sat some time, I should have gone in to be present at the trial if Skobeleff had not held me back.

But out they came at last on to the steps, the spy in front, his hands in the pocket of his jacket, as if the matter did not concern him, because he felt he was innocent. But when he saw the soldiers he seemed to realize that the affair was serious ; he stood still a few seconds, heaved a deep sigh, and then went down the steps.

It was a certain Baron K.; I do not know whether he was really a spy ; but probably compromising papers were found on him, for he was sent to Siberia. After two months, however, he was allowed to return.

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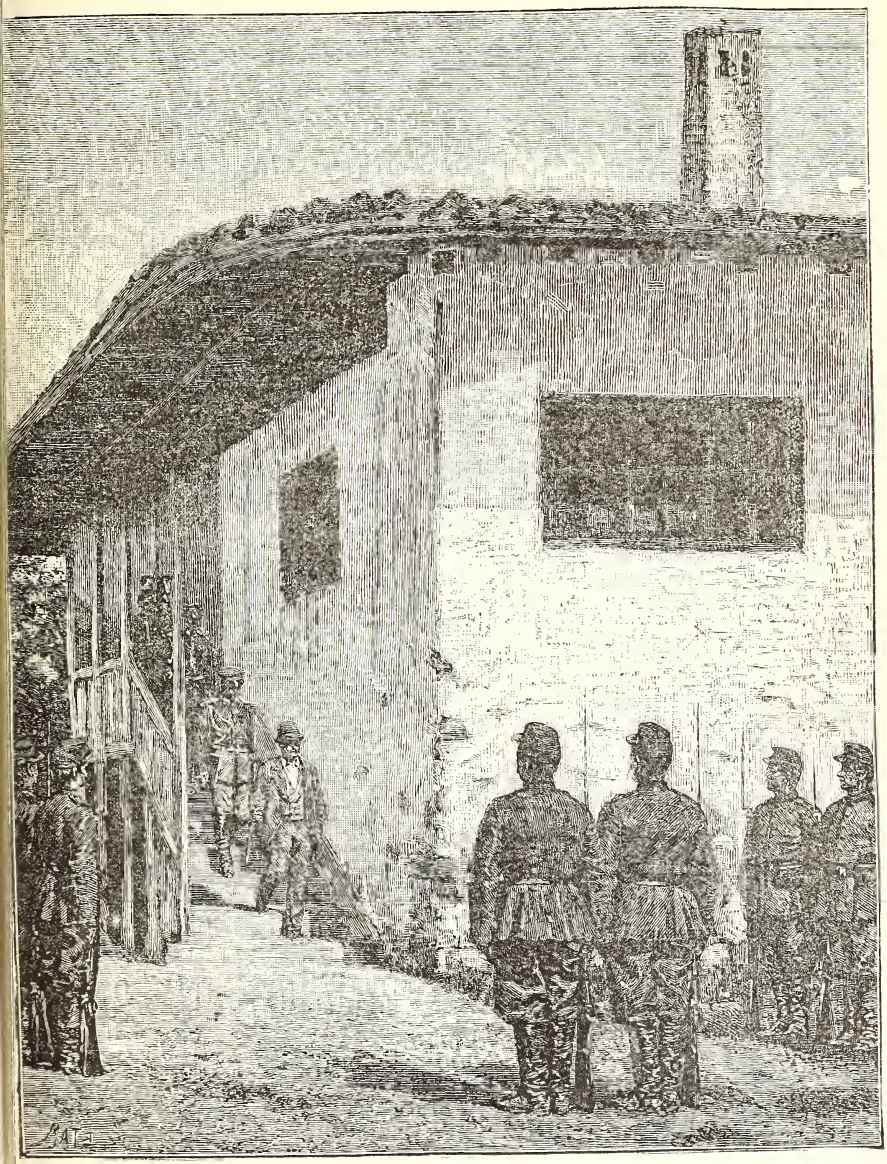
Before my departure to Paris I had met at headquarters Lieutenant Skrydloff of the naval guard. He was then going on a reconnoitring expedition on the Danube, and invited me to Mali-Dijos, where the Danube division of the naval



SPY.

guard was stationed. He told me that he intended to attack a Turkish ironclad with his torpedo boat, and wanted me to go with him. I was quite willing, but made him give me his word of honor that I should see an explosion. I could not afford to miss so rare an opportunity.

Soon after my return to Giurgevo I paid a visit to the naval officers, who lived in a village some distance from the river bank, because the dynamite and pyroxiline with which the torpedoes are charged had to be protected as far as possible from the Turkish fire.

Skrydloff and I had been comrades long ago as naval cadets, though he was my junior by two years; and we had been through a campaign together on the frigate "Svetlana." When I was sergeant in the naval cadet corps he was under me, and more than once I had had to reprimand him severely, particularly for constantly talking and whispering at the front.

I quartered myself on him and his comrade Podiapolski in their little house, which was situated in a large, dirty square. Sometimes we dined at the officers' mess, but more often cooked ourselves something at home, on which occasions the *denchtchik* (officer's servant), a good fellow, gave us a helping hand. We slept on the staircase under curtains, because the gnats (it was then the end of May) were very troublesome.

On the very first day I was initiated into the great secret of the two chums. When the naval guard left St. Petersburg, the head of the well-known English firm which contracted for them presented the division with a case of sherry to take with them, which Skrydloff undertook to convey to the Danube. So far he kept his word; but no one beside Podiapolski knew anything about this case, and so the friends partook of the sherry, which was very good, and entertained guests with it occasionally, until at last the truth became known, and the case, now somewhat lighter, was carried off to the mess-room.

The commander of the whole torpedo squadron, Post-Captain Novikoff, was living in the same square—a very brave officer, who had been decorated for his services at Sebastopol with the small cross of St. George. When I met him for the first time, at the table of the commander-in-chief, our host asked him what he had received the cross for. "I blew up a

powder-magazine," replied N., in such a deep bass that everybody was startled. The same bass voice, though somewhat subdued, was heard in the cottage in which he lived. When we had tea with him, we tried to gather from his talk, and from the arrangements he was making, whether the laying of the torpedoes would soon begin. The object of this operation (which had been long expected) was to protect the passage of the Danube, which was to take place immediately after.

Novikoff was indefatigable. Brave and cool-headed, he had only two noticeable faults—first, he deafened everybody with his voice, and secondly, he would speak of the torpedoes as bombs. Nevertheless he received a ready pardon for both these offences, on account of his kind and simple ways.

* * *

I went frequently with Skrydloff when he had instructions to carry out. We rowed about the river (by night, of course,) placing buoys to mark the course the torpedo boats were to take in laying the torpedoes. The Danube was still much swollen, and some torpedo boats of rather deep draught could not pass everywhere along the low flooded bank. The channel of a little river flowing into the Danube had to be sounded and marked with buoys ; torpedoes were to be laid there also.

As express orders had been given not to alarm the Turks and arouse their attention, but rather to lull them into security as far as possible, we did not set to work until after nightfall. By morning the buoys were fixed ; but the clearing of the channel, which was barred at the mouth with solid posts, gave us a great deal to do, and we could not get the work done in that short time. When we had made a little temporary passage for the sloop, we rowed into the Danube, partly to show our courage, partly to ascertain whether there were Turks at the sentry box on the island. Using the oars very softly, scarcely dipping them into the water, we passed along a dense bed of willows. Every sudden noise—the splashing of a fish, the call of a night-bird—made us shudder. We landed at the little island, walked around, and convinced ourselves that the Turks had evacuated it, although they had been seen mowing grass shortly before. We had come down

with the stream ; the Turkish bank was quite close. The current was so strong that it was difficult to make any progress against it. In order not to tire our men and attract the attention of the Turks, we soon turned back. By morning we were at home. Skrydloff's assistant, Midshipman Niloff, who had made the night trip with us, cleared out the little river completely the following night.

Another time we went on a secret mission to all the troops posted on the Danube. We rowed on past the Kuban Cossacks, the Vladicaucasians, and the Osettes to Simnitza, where some hussars—I forget which—had placed outposts.

At Parapan I became acquainted with General Dragomiroff, who was intrusted with preparations for the passage of the river. When he was assured that I was not a correspondent, he spoke so freely, rationally, and logically about the course of affairs, that we—*i.e.*, Skrydloff, I, and Wulfert, with whom we were staying—were quite astonished. Dragomiroff enjoyed then, and still enjoys, great popularity, and since Skobeleff's death he remains one of the best generals of our army, if not the very best.

The officers with whom we dined were extremely pleasant ; they fed us well, and provided us promptly with the necessary horses. Skrydloff, however, would have been better pleased if a little care in the choice had been added to the promptitude ; for such Rosinantes fell to his lot, almost it seemed intentionally, that on the ride from the hussars to the Cossacks he had to whip his tall brown horse constantly, and (what was more unpleasant still) in spite of his efforts to ride in the English fashion, namely, to rise in the stirrups, he grazed himself in a certain part severely.

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I made a sketch of the Danube and a Cossack picket on the bank, but on the whole painted very little. I rode to Giurgevo, went to the Cossacks, looked on at the sappers' works, or went with Skrydloff to try some machinery on his torpedo boat "Shutka." In order not to alarm the Turks, we were obliged to go after sunset or in bad weather, and the funnel could not be allowed to smoke nor to throw out sparks, so that we had to use only the best steam coal. The Turks did not know, and were not to know, that we had a whole fleet of small steamers.

We once started at a rather late hour in very stormy weather. The wind became so strong that the "Shutka" could hardly make her way back. The muddy Danube was roaring terribly; heavy rain wrapped everything in thick darkness. This suggested to Skrydloff the idea of carrying out a long-intended attack on one of the Turkish ironclads which were lying before Rustchuk. We knew that one ironclad was lying in front of the forts, another more to the right behind the little island. As, from the hammering that had been going on for the last few days, it was to be supposed that they had been furnishing the latter with a crinoline or some similar means of protection, we could only count on getting near the first ironclad. In such weather it was possible to get close to the ironclad almost unnoticed. "Shall we try it?" asked Skrydloff. "I am ready." But we did not go after all. Skrydloff said finally, "It is not a question of destroying a superfluous Turkish ironclad, but of laying torpedoes and making the passage of the river possible for our army. With such an important object in view, it would be imprudent, nay, even wrong, to risk one of our best torpedo boats, of which, as it is, the number is not very large. What do you think?" "I dare say you are right," I replied.

We decided to land, but in consequence of the bad weather, mistook our direction, put in at the wrong place, a very long way from our village, and did not reach home till night. On the promontory where we landed there was a picket of three Cossacks; and these fellows, wrapped in their *burkas* (Caucasian for "cloaks"), were so sound asleep that we had to wake them by force. If a party of Tcherkesses had come they would have been slaughtered like sheep. I did not conceal the occurrence from the commander of the sotnia, but first exacted a promise that the Cossacks should go unpunished this time.

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The commander of the sotnia stationed at Mali-Dijos was K. P. V., the same omniscient and ubiquitous officer who at Skobeleff's request had bought me my horse and carriage. I became rather intimate with this peculiar person, and often visited him. His first question when I came was if I did not want some *borshtch* (beet-root soup). "Well, then, tea at any

rate," he would call out, and without waiting for my answer order it to be got ready. From what plantations he procured his tea I do not know, but remember very well that it only just colored the water, and that K. P. considered it good. There were no teaspoons, although the host told his denchtchik every time to bring teaspoons. The latter would then go to the hedge and cut a switch neatly with his dagger. K. P. drank tea in economical fashion, taking the sugar into his mouth ; if he did not use a piece quite up he threw back the rest of it into the sugar-basin. His conversation with me, as probably with every other person, began with the stereotyped question, "Well, do they say we are going to cross soon?" Then he passed on to the rumors of peace, which, arising from unknown sources, flew about even before the war operations began, and he never forgot to inquire, more or less confidentially, how money could be sent home in the best, safest, and most advantageous manner, and whether gold could be sent.

Kusma Petrovitch was evidently very fond of his home, and the more the campaign was protracted, the more frequent and obstinate were the rumors which reached him, through unknown channels, of the speedy conclusion of peace. He talked a great deal of his farm near Stavropol, of his eldest son Kusmitch and his precocious intelligence and early development. He also described the hare and fox-hunting when the first snow fell, for which he had purchased his sporting dog Milka. Every time I visited him, he offered me the dog as a present. He would also talk about the battles with the mountaineers on the Kuban, without representing himself as a hero ; on the contrary, he confessed quite openly that he saved his life by running away in such and such an engagement, which act the Cossacks do not consider dishonorable, as they hold that as long as one is superior to the enemy one must kill and defeat him, but that in the opposite case one must save oneself, and the quicker the better.

I also discovered that Kusma Petrovitch was a musician. I went to his quarters once by invitation, with Skrydloff and two other naval officers, and found him dressed in a fur *beshmet* (jacket), with a violin in his hand, conducting a chorus of singers. I am bound to admit that the hand which guided the bow was more bold than practiced ; but, as the saying goes, you can't expect a man to do more than his best. His

speech was always calm and tranquil, and so were his eyes, which sometimes had an absent look. He had a very calm manner, too, in dealing with his men, and never abused them except in extreme cases.

He also worshipped his horse—a little black animal from Kabarda—and fed and coddled it so that it got quite round like a juicy apple ; but for riding he used another horse. "A horse like that," he used to say of his favorite, "is no longer to be found even in Kabarda!" and he would then declare that he would not sell it at any price. This did not, however, prevent his selling it to me later for three hundred roubles, although it was scarcely worth more than a hundred or a hundred and fifty. In a word, one found him a typical Cossack, who had risen from the ranks, who was no coward, though not particularly brave (both bravery and cowardice being equally rare among the Cossacks); a man without any cultivation whatever, but with the capacity to make himself at home in any position, to find provisions and forage where they seemed absolutely not to exist. to pursue the enemy boldly, when he retreated, and, when he attacked, to retreat before him without loss of honor.

* * *

Skrydloff told me, in confidence, that he had seen at Novikoff's house a paper from headquarters which expressed the dissatisfaction of the commander-in-chief at the backward state of the preparations, whereby the laying of the pontoons (which were quite ready) and the passage of the whole army were delayed. This, of course, meant that the passage would take place during the next few days, although coals and other things were still wanting. He also told me that he and Ch. had been appointed to attack the enemy's ironclads, in case the latter should attempt to interfere with our operations. He had learned further that Novikoff did not wish any one to accompany the expedition who did not belong to the division, so that if I wanted to go I ought to speak to the captain in good time.

At first Modest Petrovitch seemed inexorable, and answered by repeatedly advising me to look on from the bank—it was only about three versts ; but at last he gave in, and we began our preparations for the campaign against the

Turks. We cooked several chickens, took a bottle of sherry (the case of which everybody knew had already been taken away), and provided ourselves with bread and other supplies for nearly a week ; and beside drawing-paper I took my little paint-box, which, however, was not destined to be used.

* * *

The evening before our expedition I received through Skobeleff the following telegram from headquarters : "The artist Verestchagin is to join the rifle brigade immediately.—Skalon." At first I was puzzled, but when I got to Giurgevo I understood how it was. Some time before I had begged Skalon, the commander-in-chief's secretary, to give me an opportunity of witnessing the passage of the river, and to attach me temporarily for this purpose to the most advanced troops. The rifle brigade had now moved out toward Simnitza, so that the passage was to be made somewhere in that direction. As the troops marched only at night (remaining quiet during the day in order not to arouse the Turks), not less than forty-eight hours would be required for the march ; I therefore hoped to arrive with the blue-jackets in good time for the laying of the torpedoes, and then to overtake General Tsvetsinski with his brigade.

I went into the little house where my things were, in order to select what was absolutely necessary. While thus engaged I did not feel quite comfortable ; I reflected that the Turks would not watch Skrydloff blowing them up quite so quietly as I intended to watch the explosion, and that our torpedoes in all probability would hurl us into the air first. I left my lodgings, saw to my horses (among them a new white ambling nag, which cost five-and-twenty gold pieces), called on a few officers, and then went that very night to Mali-Dijos.

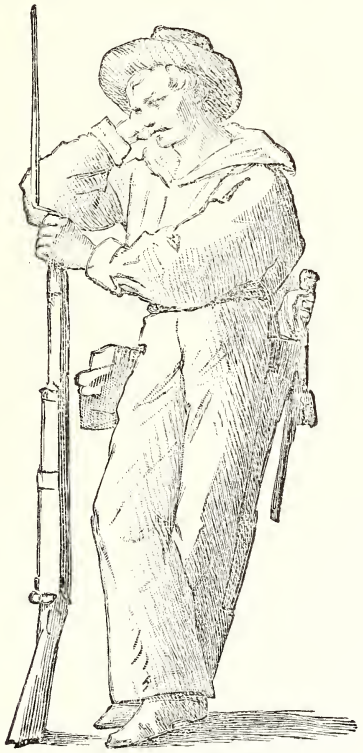
My younger brother, who had joined the service again in the Vladicaucasian regiment, arrived that day and came to me. I took him to his superior officers, and then went, with my knapsack, to the blue-jackets.

After dinner the senior officer of the naval detachment gave out brandy to the crews in the court-yard of the house where the mess was held, and did it so solemnly and methodically that our departure was considerably delayed. It was already nearly dark when we assembled on the shore of the

little bay where the torpedo boats lay, just getting up their steam.

Quite unexpectedly, young Skobeleff appeared, took Novikoff aside, and began to talk to him with great eagerness. He expressed his wish to be useful to the detachment, and proposed that he should accompany the expedition ; but Novikoff gave him a decided refusal.

The chaplain of the Minsk regiment, a very advanced young man, offered a prayer for the journey. As I knelt I looked with curiosity at the interesting scene before me. On



SAILOR.

the right, the setting sun was shedding his last rays, and the smoking torpedo boats stood out like dark shadows against the crimson sky and water ; on the bank were the sailors in a semicircle, the officers in their midst, all on their knees, all praying fervently. Around silence reigned : the voice of the chaplain alone was audible.

I could not at the time make any sketch of the torpedo boats, which has prevented me from reproducing on canvas this scene, which impressed itself deeply on my memory.

When the prayer was over, those who were going embraced those who remained behind. Among the latter was Podiapolski, our friend and chum. When, on leaving, I embraced Skobeleff, he whispered, " Happy fellow, to be able to go with them ! How I envy you ! "

* * *

Skrydloff did not hurry to get up steam, and we had to make use of the oars. When I reproached him for this, he said reassuringly : " You may be certain that we shall overtake everybody, and reach the Danube sooner than the others, who do not know the channel and will get aground." And so it was. The darkness was so great that the buoys were not visible, and could not be seen even by the pilot on the first sloop. As soon as our engines began to work and we moved quickly, we saw to right and left dark motionless masses. We hailed them, and they answered us ; they were torpedo boats which were aground. Our " Shutka " set several of them afloat ; but they must have run ashore again later, for the progress made was slow.

According to our plan we were to reach the Danube before dawn and at once lay torpedoes ; but it fell out differently : daylight came, and no boat had yet reached the channel. We found the spot where we had fixed the posts. Just as Skrydloff had foretold, we were nearly the first in the channel of the Danube : no one was before us except Ch. with the second torpedo boat, which, as it excelled the others in lightness and speed, was the one fixed upon to carry out the attack. In speed our " Shutka " took the second place.

We stayed for a long time in one place in order that the others might come up with us, and then steamed along beside a little island, whose thick trees concealed us from the observation of the Turks. To approach secretly and lay a

torpedo by the Turkish bank, as had been planned, was evidently out of the question; besides, all the torpedo boats, except ours and perhaps two others, smoked and snorted terribly, so that our squadron would have been betrayed by that alone.

We had scarcely come out from behind the first island when smoke rose near the sentry-box on the opposite bank. A shot fell; then a second, a third, and more and more the farther we went. The bank was not far off, and we could see clearly the soldiers running hither and thither in confusion. Fresh riflemen soon came up, especially Tcherkesses, who rained upon us a regular shower of bullets.

Novikoff overtook us. He stood at the helm, resting his elbows on the iron roof of the torpedo boat, and paying no attention to the bullets, for which his stout figure, wrapped in a mantle, presented a good target.

The quantity of shot that fell made it rather hot for us; the bank was literally covered with riflemen, whose bullets made a noise like the continuous rolling of drums. The torpedo boats moved on heavily and silently; the first had already begun their work by the bank when the last were just entering the river. The sun had long since risen; it was a bright summer morning, with a gentle breeze ruffling the water. Under a persistent fire the torpedoes had been laid; but the blue-jackets committed the great mistake of not going at once straight to the right or Turkish bank, but beginning from the left bank. The first torpedoes were laid quite correctly; toward the middle, too, Midshipman Niloff laid his torpedoes, but, being hurried, he did not lay them quite properly, and so they came to the surface again. Further than this, none of the officers ventured to go, and half of the channel therefore remained passable. This mistake was rectified by Podiapolski in the night. Nevertheless the Turks might easily have broken through, and the fact that they did not attempt to do so can only be attributed to the fear with which they had been inspired by the previous blowing up of their vessels by Russian torpedoes.

* * *

Our two torpedo boats in the mean time were concealed behind the bushes of a small island which lies a little below the spot where our operations were being carried on. We

certainly heard a noise in the brushwood on the island, but paid no attention to it. Suddenly two boats appeared and made rapidly toward us. We were just preparing to receive them with the little hand-torpedoes which Skrydloff had ready in the event of a hand-to-hand fight, when the supposed enemies disclosed themselves as Cossacks, who had reached the island before us to cover our operations. Their presence was due to Skobeleff, and, to say the truth, was not of the slightest use.

From the direction of Rustchuk a Turkish steamer began firing on our flotilla, but without doing any damage at all. "Nikolai Larionovitch," said I to Skrydloff, "why do you not attack her?" "Why touch her, when she does not come close, and her firing does no harm?" The steamer soon steamed away, probably to fetch assistance. Then Novikoff's torpedo boat was brought up to us. "Nikolai Larionovitch, why did you not attack that ironclad?" "That is not an ironclad, but a steamer; I thought you only ordered an attack in the event of her coming near." "I ordered you to attack in any case. Have the goodness to do it." "Very good, sir." Novikoff went back again to the works. "Now, my good fellow," I said to Skrydloff, "you will see, if the torpedoes are badly laid, you will be the scapegoat; any failure will be set down to you." "Now I shall attack," he replied. "My orders are now plain and clear."

Skrydloff gave orders that all should be made ready. He took up his position in the bows, where he could keep his eye on the helm and bow torpedo. To me he intrusted the floating stern torpedo, in the handling of which he had already instructed me, and told me when I was to throw it, and when to give the word "Fire!"

To freshen up his men a little, he ordered them to wash. "Won't you wash?" he asked of me. "Have done it already." "But you have no soap."

There was nothing for it: I was obliged to wash again with soap.

We all put on cork belts, in case the "Shutka" should blow up and we should fall into the water, which, indeed, would be the most likely consequence of the explosion. We ate a little chicken, took a sip of sherry, and then my friend lay down to take a nap, and, by Heaven! his iron nerves suffered him actually to fall asleep!

I did not sleep: I stood at the stern leading on to the iron roof which covered the engines, and looked up stream toward Rustchuk. "She is coming!" announced one of the sailors in a low voice. And, true enough, between the bank and the tall trees of the little island which concealed the channel of the Danube, smoke was rising and rapidly approaching.

"Nikolai Larionovitch, get up: she is coming." Skrydloff started up: "Push off! Go ahead! Full speed!" We flew rapidly along. The Turkish vessels were not yet visible. "Nikolai Larionovitch," I called out to him again, "a little slower, so that we may meet her nearer this place; otherwise we shall run onto the Turkish bank!" "None of that, old fellow. You heard my instructions. I shall go now even to Rustchuk!" "Well, go ahead!"

The steamer came on; compared with the "Shutka" she seemed to be enormously large.

Skrydloff steered straight at her, and with the speed of a locomotive we rushed upon her.

What confusion there was!—not only on board the ship, but also on the bank. They, no doubt, guessed that the little nutshell was carrying destruction to the steamer.

The riflemen and Tcherkesses on the bank rushed headlong into the water, in order to fire from as short a distance as possible. The bullets rained down upon us; the whole bank was wrapped in thick smoke. On the deck of the steamer the crew were running about in great consternation. We saw the officers rush to the helm and turn the ship to the bank; and at the same time they gave us with their heavy guns such a salvo as made the poor "Shutka" stagger in her course.

"Now you are in for it," I thought to myself, "and you won't get out alive." I took off my boots, and advised Skrydloff to do the same. The sailors followed our example.

I then looked round. Not one of the torpedo boats was following us. It was supposed that something had happened to their engines.

Whatever was the cause, the "Shutka" was alone, absolutely alone, and the squadron far behind. The fire became unbearable. Our vessel trembled under the rain of rifle-bullets; the cannon shot shook her so that she seemed to be going to pieces. There were already several holes in her sides, and one at the stern, near the spot where I stood, was almost on the water-line; the iron roof that protected the

engines had also been pierced. The sailors hid themselves at the bottom of the sloop, and covered themselves with whatever they could lay hands on ; so that nothing was to be seen of them, except part of the face of one gunner, who was holding a buoy in front of him for protection, but was otherwise as motionless as a statue. Now we were quite close to the steamer. The crashing and screaming made by the bullets and shells as they poured into the " Shutka " became worse and worse.

Suddenly I saw Skrydloff, who was sitting at the helm, draw himself together,—he had been struck by a bullet, and was almost immediately hit again.

Our engineer, looking very pale, had taken off his cap and was praying ; but at this moment he took courage, and, drawing out his watch, called to Skrydloff as we were on the point of delivering our blow, " Nikolai Larionovitch, five minutes past eight."

In spite of the danger, I observed with curiosity the Turks on the steamer as we came close up to her. They stood there as if turned to stone, their hands raised and stretched out, and their heads bent down toward us.

At the last minute our steersman got nervous ; he steered to the right, and the current carried us away from the steamer. Skrydloff turned sharply upon him : " To the left, or you are a dead man," and seized the helm himself. The " Shutka " turned, came slowly alongside the hull of the steamer, and touched her with her torpedo-spar. At this moment there was the deepest silence among us as well as among the enemy ; still as death, we awaited the explosion.

" Has she gone off ? " asked the gunner, who was crouching at the bottom of the boat.

" Not yet," I answered in a whisper.

" Fire ! " again cried Skrydloff ; but again no explosion followed.

In the mean time the current had caught hold of us, and our broken torpedo-spar became entangled in the steamer's ropes. The Turks recovered their presence of mind and poured a worse fire than ever upon us from the bank. When the torpedo-spar had been cut away at Skrydloff's command, we at length got free. The steamer turned broadside on, and raised such waves that the " Shutka," which had been badly injured, began to fill with water ; in addition to this misfort-

une, the engines worked slower and slower, so that we should have made no way at all but for the current.

Supposing that we were going to the bottom the next moment, I stood up and put one foot on the gunwale. Then came a violent crash under me and a blow on my hip—such a blow as might have come from an axe. I fell headlong, but got up again directly.

* * *

The current carried us along very near to the Turkish bank, whence the Turks now fired in close proximity. It was truly a wonder they did not kill us all. They ran along behind and fired at us, abusing us, as we could distinctly hear, into the bargain. I tried to answer with a few shots,

SKRYDLOFF.

but soon gave it up, as I saw the uselessness of the attempt.

The current carried us a considerable distance away. In our rear was a line of trading vessels which were at anchor between the bank and the little island in the right arm of the river. On the left stretched the same island with its large many-branched willows ; the arm of the river at this spot

is very narrow. The steamer did not pursue us, but from the fort an ironclad was making toward us at full steam; the steamer had probably summoned her to its aid.

"Nikolai Larionovitch!" I cried, as loud as I could (for the firing drowned our voices), "Nikolai Larionovitch, do you see the ironclad?" "Of course I do." "What do you mean to do?" "Attack her with your torpedo: get it ready."

For us, who were half sunk and borne along by the current, an attack was a difficult matter; but there was no other course open. The ironclad came up and fired twice at us. The rope which held the torpedo was cut through, and I told the gunner to be ready to launch it. Then suddenly, to our joy, the arm of the river came in sight at the end of the island on the left, and by forcing our engines to a final effort we just escaped.

Here at last we breathed freely. Large ships could no longer follow us, and the ironclad had to be content with firing a shot after us.

As the "Shutka" was sinking deeper and deeper, Skrydloff gave orders to wrap the hull round with sailcloth; thus we might hope to get home in safety.

* * *

Protected by the little island we examined our injuries more closely. The "Shutka" was completely crushed by the shots, and seemed as if she would be of no further use; she was pierced not only above but also below the water-line: we threw overboard several handfuls of the enemy's bullets. Skrydloff had two wounds in his legs and a bruised hand; I had been wounded in the fleshy part of the thigh. When I got on my feet after the blow, although I was able to stand upright, yet I felt a discomfort in my right leg, and I began to feel the part. My trousers were pierced in two places, and my finger went right into the flesh. Oh! am I really wounded? Such was the fact: my whole hand was bloody. And so this is being wounded! how simple it is!—I had always thought it was much more complicated. The bullet or grapeshot struck the bottom of the sloop, and as it rebounded pierced the muscle of the hip close to the bone. If the latter had been hit, death would have been certain.

Not one of the sailors was wounded. Curiously enough,

it now came out that the terrible fire had cut the conducting wire and had thereby prevented the explosion of the torpedo. "The conducting wires are broken, sir," reported the gunner to Skrydloff. "Impossible." "It is so: will you kindly look yourself." Skrydloff was not a little pleased at this, for now the accusation of ignorance, want of skill, or even of carelessness, which his friends would certainly have brought against him, could not be raised. As we left the steamer behind us, Skrydloff only complained that the breaking of the spar and the want of steam did not allow a repetition of the attack with the bow torpedo. To be sure, we were then running straight at the ironclad, and we could still have made an attack with the stern torpedo; but this prospect seemed to interest him much less. My friend tore his hair, and cried with such a voice of despair that I really pitied him: "So much work, trouble, and preparation, and all in vain." "Do stop," I called to him: "what is the use of this lamentation? It was a failure, but not from ignorance." And when our Nikolai Larionovitch discovered that under the actual circumstances an explosion was impossible, he became more cheerful and his distress vanished.

The only question that remained to be decided was why the second torpedo boat had not followed us when we made our attack. We found no answer. We are justified in believing that this was the first and the last occasion on which an enemy's ship was attacked by a single torpedo boat. On the whole the result was satisfactory, for the steamer as well as the ironclad turned tail. And therefore the object of the attack had been attained.

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I may here be allowed to say a few words about volunteers, who are declared by a specialist in Kronstadt to be only an incumbrance in battle. My opinion is just the reverse of this. If a volunteer understands discipline, and also the affair in hand, he will as a matter of course be not only brave, but (what is very important) cool also. When, for example, the second torpedo had to be gotten ready, the gunner was so timid that he unconsciously turned round and round in confusion. I pulled out my knife to cut the cord. Another gunner also seemed not to have all his wits about him before the attack; for without any cause he touched the

conducting apparatus which carries the current to the torpedo when we were still at a considerable distance from the enemy. And the helmsman already mentioned steered, in his nervousness, in a wrong direction, and, moreover, turned to Skrydloff and asked if it were not better to pass. All these instances seemed to me to prove that a sailor or a soldier who is *forced* to go forward does not do so with the same degree of composure and presence of mind as the volunteer who *wishes* to go forward.

After we had left our place of refuge Skrydloff went to Novikoff to report. All the officers were standing on the bank. They did not seem to know what had happened to us, for the island had hidden us from sight during the attack.

"Did you blow them up?" they called out as we came toward them. "No," replied Skrydloff; "their fire was too heavy and cut the conducting wires. Vassili Vassilievitch and I are wounded." General silence followed, in which disapproval was manifest; only the kindly Novikoff threw Skrydloff a kiss and thanked him for the unequal combat.

Our men rested, breakfasted, and got ready to move on. They dragged us up the Roumanian bank. A stretcher was made of oars and Skrydloff laid upon it; I went on foot. During the excitement I felt neither pain nor fatigue, but by the time we had gone a mile I was leaning nearly my whole weight on the sailors who were supporting me. On the bank we met Skobeleff and Strukoff, who had watched the laying of the torpedoes from a distance. Skobeleff, who embraced and kissed us, cried, "What brave fellows, brave fellows!" This bravest of the brave was evidently envious because he had not been wounded. They took us into the village of Parapan, where we were lodged in the house of a landowner; it was the house where Wulfert lived and where I had made Dragomiroff's acquaintance.

Soon after, a battery of horse artillery came at a gallop from Rustchuk and began unlimbering their guns just opposite to the spot where the bluejackets were resting. Strukoff gave notice to the flotilla in good time, and it was able to move away up stream to lay the other line of torpedoes. The battery fired upon the boats and the things which the sailors had imprudently left scattered about, and bombarded

our house. On this occasion I made the officers who were present laugh, quite unintentionally. It happened thus: They proposed that we should migrate to a peasant's house farther up the village, so as to be out of range. Skrydloff assented; but I objected, because staying in a peasant's house presented a prospect of flea-bites; and I still think my objection was not ill-founded.

III.

THE PASSAGE OF THE BALKANS,

1877–1878.

In order to join Skobeleff's detachment I left Plevna. At Bogot, where our headquarters then were, I sent in my name to the commander-in-chief, who received me at once in the kindest manner. In the course of conversation I sketched for him the outline of the Turkish fortifications at Shandornik on the high road to Sofia, and a rough plan of our positions. The Grand Duke was rather excited, because Gourko was to come down from the mountains at that place on that very day. "Ah, if it only succeeds! if it only succeeds!" repeated the Grand Duke Nicholas, passing his hand over his forehead as if he would drive away his apprehensions. I assured him there was no cause for fear; Gourko's troops would certainly leave the mountains without fail. "Then *au revoir*—there," he added, pointing with his hand in the direction of the Balkans.

Owing to the lateness of the hour I could get nothing to eat at headquarters, and was obliged to appease my hunger in a sutler's tent. It was very late indeed when I started on the road to Loftsha, on my long-legged Caucasian horse.

To my great grief, I was soon obliged to acknowledge to myself that the new horse I had recently bought was fit for nothing. It could neither walk, nor trot, nor gallop. "Buying horses of Prince O. is to be discontinued in future," said I to myself; for he had sold me a used-up nag.

At a Turkish village five versts from Loftsha I halted for the night. As I was asking for admission into one of the houses a soldier came running up to me. "Please not to knock, sir; we are here to assign quarters." "Then show me some quickly." I was quartered somewhere at the end of the village, but the cottage was clean. They brought me a chicken, and gave my horse hay, and even oats, which would have been scarcely obtainable in a Bulgarian village.

In the Bulgarian villages we did what we pleased and took what we liked, but the Turkish villages were protected from this treatment by the military authorities. The privilege we exercised as friends and brothers was, as may be seen, not exactly advantageous to the Bulgarians.

My stay in Loftsha was not long. I entered it in the morning and left in the evening of the same day. The town lies in a valley, protected by the steep bank of the Osma and by surrounding hills, which were so strongly fortified that we should scarcely have taken it but for Skobeleff.

The storming of Loftsha was bloody indeed; the dead literally filled the trenches, my brother told me. Skobeleff's composure on that day, he said, struck him as most astonishing. Among other incidents, my brother mentioned the following: "Skobeleff gave me orders to lead a battalion to a certain point. We marched on as long as there were buildings to shelter us; but when we came to the open ground advance was quite impossible. Whoever tried it fell dead or wounded. I dismounted and halted the battalion, seeing that a further advance meant its annihilation. But just at that moment what did I see but Skobeleff riding calmly at a walk across the fatal space, with shot and shell whistling round him! When I saw him I reproached myself bitterly for my cowardice."

On leaving Loftsha I fell in with the commander-in-chief's drunken coachman. The inebriated charioteer was noisy, and quarrelled with everybody on the high road. When I requested him to leave me room to pass he replied with abuse. I struck out with my whip and gave him a cut. This proved effectual, but the drunken fellow threatened to complain to his master; to do which I also urged him, in order that the Grand Duke might learn what a bad coachman he was, and get rid of him.

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I reached the town of Selvi, whither my brother had been sent immediately after the passage of the Danube. The Bashi-bazouks had threatened to plunder and burn the town, and the terrified inhabitants had sent a deputation to the Grand Duke to beg for assistance.

My brother, who had sent off his brigade to reconnoitre, happened to be at hand, and the Grand Duke dispatched

him with his half-sotnia of Caucasian Cossacks against the Turks. He easily accomplished his mission. The inhabitants of the town presented him in consequence with a very curious address of thanks, which enumerated his deeds. During my stay in Selvi I had an opportunity of discovering in the bazaar that his name was very popular. On making a purchase, it was sufficient to order that the goods should be delivered to "Alexander"; the merchants at once knew who was meant; the whole town, in fact, knew that Selvi's deliverer was back again.

When Skobeleff arrived at Selvi, I found him engaged with the divisional commanders. When I gave him a message from the Grand Duke, he observed, "Radetski will not go to the rescue; he says, 'Go if you like; I shall not stir.' Well, we will go and, if necessary, die gloriously." That was Skobeleff's favorite phrase. But I hoped that it would not come to that, for I did not so much want to die gloriously as to witness the passage of the troops over the snow-covered mountains, and the decisive battle which now seemed inevitable.

The plan of crossing the Balkans by turning the enemy's position at the Shipka had been projected long before by General Radetski, or, to speak more correctly, by the chief of his staff, Dmitroffski. The plan had been approved at headquarters, but the serious state of affairs at Plevna prevented its execution. Now Plevna had fallen, and the plan which had been laid aside was taken up again. Two columns, commanded respectively by Generals Sviatopolk-Mirski and Skobeleff, were fitted out to conduct this flank movement, and Radetski received corresponding orders.

Radetski was alarmed. "I certainly proposed this plan," so ran his answer, "but at a time when there was no snow on the mountains. It is no longer practicable." Dmitroffski was extremely perturbed: in his opinion the columns would inevitably be swallowed up in the banks and drifts of snow. The Grand Duke, however, kept to his purpose, and the columns were dispatched under Skobeleff and Sviatopolk-Mirski. When Radetski saw that his protests were unheeded, he washed his hands of the matter. "Let them go," he said; "I shall not stir, for I have not taken leave of my senses."

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Skobeleff and Kuropatkin (the chief of his staff) had no small trouble in procuring the necessary means of transport for the division. Skobeleff, with that thoughtfulness and prudence which always characterized him, had long before prepared saddles and everything necessary for his division (the 16th), and had had them sent to Selvi and Tirnovo. But Sviatopolk-Mirski's division, passing through these places before him, took these supplies in requisition without further ceremony. So everything had to be procured afresh. Kuropatkin hastened to Tirnovo. With the support of the governor, Stcherbinski, he succeeded in a few days in acquiring what was necessary.

We soon advanced toward Gabrovo. The commander-in-chief and his staff were to take up their quarters in Selvi. Gabrovo was very lively : the whole place was in commotion. At Skobeleff's dinner-table new faces appeared, the divisional commanders of his detachment, some of them—for instance, a colonel of the rifles—very original characters. Skobeleff, among other matters, bade us remember that during the passage of the Balkans he should not keep open table—not very pleasant news for us, though, for myself, I had a little store of preserves and necessaries for cooking.

In the town there was ceaseless stir, noise, and confusion. A vast mass of people of all kinds rolled continuously through the streets. It is really wonderful that spies did not slip in among them, who might have betrayed to the Turks our preparations for turning their position. As it was, the Turks were taken completely by surprise ; it had never occurred to them that danger could threaten them on their flank at such a season.

I had ridden out with X., one of Skobeleff's orderlies, to see some of his Bulgarian acquaintances. On our return I met the general in the square. "I am looking for a horse," he said, praising my ambling nag. "Take this one." "No, thank you," Skobeleff replied ; "I must have a gray. Is there not a gray?" "I have a gray," said I, "but it is small and will scarcely carry you." From the dragoons he got a handsome white horse. Later, as I was riding to the Shipka to visit some old acquaintances, I met Skobeleff coming back from there at a gallop through deep snow. "The new horse," thought I to myself, "will not hold out long."

Skobeleff had seen Radetski again, received orders from

him, and heard again from his own lips that he would not stir. That same evening, when I paid a visit to my old Turkestan acquaintance, General Dmitroffski, at Gabrovo, I found him much excited. He could not accustom himself to the idea of a winter campaign at all, and far into the night he talked to me of the imprudence, not to say folly, of our advance.

Skobeleff, on the other hand, was convinced that the undertaking would be successful. When we started for the village of Toplish the troops were already beyond that place.

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My Cossack, Kurbatoff, was, of course, not ready at the time of departure, and I was imprudent enough to leave him behind at his request till the following day. He was to overtake me ; but to my no small vexation, several days passed by, and there were no signs of my Cossack. On the way I had to do without several things, and I was therefore glad when I reached Toplish. Night had set in. I was soon obliged to give up my hopes of a night's lodging, for every room in the village had been filled to overflowing since the morning. I forced my way into Skobeleff's quarters, but he had already retired to rest, and lay in that deep sleep which he generally enjoyed before the commencement of an important undertaking. I endeavored in vain to reconcile this power of sleep with Skobeleff's highly strung nerves.

At the quarters of the chief doctor of the division (with whom, if I remember rightly, I had become acquainted at one of the ambulance tents at Plevna) I was fortunate enough to get a glass of tea. I passed the night on the floor of a cottage ; my fellow lodgers were unknown to me. The next morning my Cossack had still not arrived with my things. I promised myself never to leave him behind again.

The troops were already marching up the mountains in long lines. In order to reach Skobeleff I had to force my way past them, which it was not easy to do without almost impaling oneself on the bayonets. For nearly four-and-twenty hours previous the sappers had been at work shovelling away the snow ; but a good deal still lay on the road, while on each side it was piled up in walls as high as a man. It was therefore impossible to leave the road. The soldiers laughed and joked as they marched. " Raise your bayonets ;

hold your bayonets out of the way," rank after rank called out when a horseman appeared, "or else he will poke his eyes out." One had regularly to practice gymnastics in the saddle in order to avoid the bayonets of the soldiers as they climbed the steep ascent, and to keep one's knees from knocking against their knapsacks. As it was, I bruised my knee finely.

The hardest work fell to the lot of a sotnia of Ural Cossacks, who were marching at the head with guides. They had to wade through masses of snow, and their horses often sank altogether. They were commanded by Sotnik Kirilin, whom I had known in Turkestan. These Cossacks were followed by the sappers already mentioned, one company strong, under the command of Laskofski, aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief.

A sad sight met us at one spot on the road. A group of musicians were resting on a mound of snow just beside the road, huddled together, shivering with cold. The instruments in their cases, some of them of huge size, lay round about in the snow. Poor musicians!

* * *

We halted rather early on a high plain opposite the mountains called the "Pillars of Marcus." Under some trees to the right a resting place was made for Skobeleff in the snow; our camping-place was close by, near the road. A small supply of preserves, coffee, and chocolate was produced from my stores and immediately consumed, as no one else had brought anything. We fed the horses too with preserved fodder, but they did not seem to care about it. The troops encamped round about us, and their camp-fires blazed up up in all directions; for though the light of these fires might have betrayed us to the Turks, Skobeleff thought that human enemies were not so much to be feared as the frost, which was very severe. It was most fortunate for the detachment that there was no snowstorm, not even wind. It must also be mentioned that Skobeleff's care extended to everything: all the soldiers had waist-belts, and on their feet bandages soaked in tallow; moreover, each soldier had with him tea and cold meat. Finally, in order to ward off the danger of freezing to death, the order had been given that the soldiers were not to let each other sleep.

I covered myself with everything I had—a felt cloak, a

rug, and a fur cape ; and yet I felt, although I lay close to the fire, that I was beginning to get numb with cold. However much I twisted and turned, it was of no use ; I was obliged to renounce the comfort to slumber. I rose, lighted a cigar, and awaited the coming day by the fire.

A portion of the troops resumed their march while it was yet dark, and we followed them at the first sign of dawn. I was just sketching the trenches which had been made in the snow on the side facing the Turkish position, when Skobeleff overtook and passed us, making his horse gallop even on this road.

The astonishment of the Turks as we came out of the woods on the open slope of the mountain facing them may be imagined. They tried to fire a few shots at us, but could not hurt us, as we were not yet within the range of their guns.

From the point we had now reached the positions of the Turkish troops, as well as of our own, were clearly visible. We saw Mount St. Nicholas, on which our brave soldiers were awaiting with impatience the result of the march by which we were turning the Turkish position, for it would bring them release from their wearisome sojourn in the snowy mud-huts of the Shipka Pass. There was the Turkish position on the "Bald Mountain," as it was called, the Turks standing in large groups, and probably talking of what fate had in store for them. They were no longer able to hinder our march ; in this snow an attack on our flank was not to be thought of ; it would be very un-Turkish, for the Turks do not like the snow. They might have prevented our descent, but we were already in the act of descending.

At the top, where it began to descend, the road ran between two considerable heights. Being an old soldier, I at once observed to Kuropatkin that both these heights ought immediately to be strongly occupied. "What are you saying ?" asked Skobeleff, who was at that moment riding just in front of us. "I said that these heights which command the descent ought in any case to be occupied." "Yes, yes. Alexi Nicholaiewitch," turning to Kuropatkin, "that is right ; have the heights occupied at once, and let the men intrench themselves." "Very well, sir," replied the colonel, not altogether pleased ; for military men do not like listening to the advice of a civilian—although I, perhaps, had a

INTRENCHMENT ON THE SHIPKA.

better claim to call myself a soldier than most of the officers of the detachment. Skobeleff, however, was above that sort of thing, and was always ready to follow sensible advice, from whomsoever it might come.

Colonel Kuropatkin is undoubtedly one of the best officers in the army : small, and with a not particularly good figure, but clever and cool-headed. In many traits of his character he was exactly the opposite of Skobeleff, who esteemed him very highly, although he constantly found himself at variance with him. In such discussions the chief of the staff, with his cool and calculating spirit, was generally more in the right than the fiery general who was so easily carried away ; but this was only the case in details and subordinate matters, for Skobeleff's view of large questions was certainly keener. For instance, with regard to the possibility of a winter march over the Balkans—a question on whose decision the whole issue of the war largely depended—Kuropatkin was of the opinion of Radetski and Dmitroski ; *i.e.* he was entirely against this expedition, and called it a mad, ruinous proceeding, etc. Skobeleff, on the other hand, was in favor of the expedition, and was firmly convinced that it would have a successful termination. "And if we do not get across, we shall die gloriously," he would say, repeating his favorite expression.

"He has only one idea : let us die, let us die !" Kuropatkin once said to me, as early as Plevna. "There is no difficulty in dying ; only one must be sure that it is worth while to die !"

News soon came from the advance guard of sappers that the Turks were moving toward us. I saw the color come in Skobeleff's cheeks. He turned immediately to the soldiers with the words, "I congratulate you, brothers ; the Turks are coming !" The soldiers answered as usual—"We will do our best, Excellency !" Dukmassoff, one of the orderlies, was sent to the assistance of the sappers with two companies.

The descent was almost more difficult than the ascent ; in some places the horses sank up to their necks in the snow ; and most grateful I was to my brave steed for the desperate efforts with which he carried me out of the holes without even stumbling ! In many places, however, it was absolutely impossible to ride ; one had to *slide* down. The soldiers slid down, chaffing and joking as if they were enjoying a holiday on the ice-slopes at home. I am no longer able to say how I came down a certain steep place with my horse ; we probably both slid down on our haunches. To have made a good road

would, of course, have required much time; on the other hand, it was beyond measure difficult (there is no such thing in the world as an impossibility) to get the cavalry down, and still more the artillery.

We were already on the southern slope of the Balkans. Skobeleff had remained on one of the furthermost heights, and surveying for a long time the valley of the Tunja and the Turkish positions which stretched out before us. On the left lay Mount St. Nicholas with the Shipka. The positions of our troops were sharply defined in black lines. There, on the rock of Mount St. Nicholas, is Mesherski's battery; there I sketched the guns and the country around, bending my head first to one side and then to the other, in order to avoid the bullets, shells, and bombs which came whistling from the Turkish batteries behind the mountains. (On the Shipka the bombs were christened "crows.") There stood the ruins of a Turkish block-house, from the window of which I wanted to make a sketch of the Tunja valley; but I was simply driven out by three shells. The first buried itself in the wall; the second flew on to the roof and covered me with sand and all kinds of things, although I was sitting on the other side of the house; the third monster struck and pierced the roof close to me with an outrageous noise, and threw such a mass of earth and rubbish upon me that I went away without finishing my picture; the colors on my palette had received such a strong mixture of foreign particles that I was obliged to throw them away. A little farther there rose from the hill the round central battery, and in between were the mud huts of Minski's regiment, with whom I had spent some days as the guest of my friend N. Beyond was a succession of well-known points: on that side of the hill, the Turkish "Nine Scale" battery; further on, the "Crow's-nest" and "Sugarloaf" batteries. Below the Russian positions came the Turkish mud huts and batteries again. Right down in the valley, from the ruins of the village of Shipka to the village of Shenovo, stretched fortified hills, which formed the centre of the Turkish position. To the right was a thick oak wood belonging to the village of Shenovo, which seemed also to be strongly fortified. Still more to the right, *i.e.*, just in front of our path, stretched the chain of the Little Balkans. Across the valley, to the right, lay the village of Imetli, after which the path is named. Finally, quite to the right, the

Tunja Valley stretched away. Skobeleff sometimes gazed earnestly in that direction, for from that quarter it was rumored that Turkish troops were coming to the relief of the Shipka.

* * *

The troops halted in the ravine, but Skobeleff as usual went on in front to reconnoiter the way. He wanted to go on horseback, but the Turks opened such a hot fire from a short distance that we were all obliged to dismount. With him were Kuropatkin (the chief of his staff), Count Keller, myself, and a few Cossacks. The Turks had established themselves on the rocks nearest the road, and poured upon us a regular shower of bullets. Our men tried to dislodge them, but our wretched Krenke rifles would not carry so far. I halted in order to make a sketch of the scene. Skobeleff had gone on a little in front, when suddenly I saw Kuropatkin coming back towards me pale as death, and supported by a soldier on each side. He stopped to take breath behind the same jutting rock under cover of which I was drawing. A ball had struck him in the left shoulder, and, after grazing the bone, had passed out through the back. The poor fellow had quite collapsed, and begged that we would examine his wound and tell him whether it was fatal or not. Skobeleff also now rejoined us, and we all began to make our way back, Kuropatkin, of course, being carried.

I have often been under heavy fire, but never before had I experienced such a murderous storm of bullets. Even at the torpedo attack on the Danube, when our boat was fired upon by the Turks and Tcherkesses and by the Turkish ships, does not seem to me to have been so heavy. The Turks fired upon us at close range, and one bullet chased another, whistling past our ears, striking the rocks there, here falling or rebounding at our feet. My horse and Skobeleff's were uninjured, but my Bulgarian's animal was killed, and over a hundred men and brutes fell besides. I walked at Skobeleff's left hand, and I confess that the clatter of the firearms (which sounded something like the rolling of drums) and the whistling of the bullets made one rather anxious. One could not help thinking, "You will be knocked down directly, and then you will learn what you wanted to learn—the meaning of war." I remember, however, that in spite of this I could not

refrain from watching Skobeleff. I wanted to see whether he would not involuntarily bend his head, affected by the whistling bullets; but no, he does not bend—not in the least. Is there no involuntary movement perceptible in the muscles of the face or of the hands? No: his face is quiet, and his hands buried, as usual, in the pockets of his overcoat. Is there not a certain unrest in his eyes, which I should have detected even if he had wished to hide it? No—at least it seems not; a certain passionless look betrays at most a deep-buried inward excitement. I still see him before me, striding along with his customary careless walk, his head bent a little on one side. "The devil take it!" I thought; "he seems to go slower and slower: does he do it on purpose?" There was really a hellish din: men and horses falling on all sides. Kuropatkin, the brave Kuropatkin, calls out from the rear: "Let those who are sound run; we shall all be annihilated." Count Keller and one or two others rushed ahead; I, who had been in many a rain of bullets before, stayed with Skobeleff. "Well, Vassily Vassilievitch," said Skobeleff to me presently, when a turn in the road at last gave us shelter from the Turkish balls, "now we know what running the gauntlet means."

I was interested in learning what Skobeleff's feelings were in face of great danger, and I asked him afterwards: "Tell me honestly: have you really so accustomed yourself to war that you no longer fear danger? I confess that I am always inwardly a little alarmed when a shell falls near me, or a bullet whistles past the tip of my nose." "Nonsense!" he rejoined; "they think that I am brave and that I am afraid of nothing; but I confess that I am a *coward*. Whenever I go into action I say to myself that this time there will be an end of me. When a bullet grazed me on the Green Mountains and I fell, my first thought was: 'Now, brother, thy play is ended.'" It pleased me to hear such a confession, for after it my own character seemed less timid. Not that I ever set a particularly high value on courage, but I had an extreme aversion to cowardice—a quality which I had occasions of observing. As I felt very uncomfortable, and was generally afraid, each time that I came under heavy fire, that a ball would lay me low at once, I was glad that Skobeleff also by no means faced death with indifference, but understood how to conceal his feelings. "I have made it a rule," he said, "never to

bend down under fire. If you once permit yourself to do that, you will be drawn on further than you wish."

I am now of the opinion that no man ever is quite tranquil at heart under fire.

Kuropatkin was bandged, and then carried back on a litter, over the Balkans, to the hospital at Gabrovo. He said to us : "Listen to my last advice : make haste and drive these Turks from their position, at any cost, or they will make terrible havoc among our troops."

Skobeleff gave orders to storm the position ; but Colonel Paniutin, to whom the orders were given, begged leave to try first to dislodge the enemy by a fusilade. He had a battalion armed with Peabody rifles, which had been taken from the Turks at Plevna. Two companies with these weapons poured a perfect shower of bullets on the Turks, and after a few minutes not a man of the enemy was to be seen—not a shot more was fired by them. I have never seen a more striking proof of what good weapons can do. It was not without reason that at Plevna our soldiers, driven to despair by the behavior of their clumsy converted muskets, whose locks would not work, seized them by the bayonets and dashed them to pieces against stones or trees, exclaiming : "If you are of no use, you shall not exist."

Paniutin with his Peabodies had undoubtedly saved the lives of many soldiers ; for an assault on the Turks, who were firmly ensconced behind jutting rocks, could not have taken place without heavy loss. How many human lives would have been saved on our side altogether if we had had good rifles at the beginning of the war, or if, even later, our troops had been armed with the rifles taken at Plevna ! There were some tens of thousands of them, with millions of cartridges ! This measure had actually been talked of, but, as I heard, we were *ashamed* to do it ! One can only wonder how anybody can have been ashamed to admit what the whole army knew, and talked of loudly, namely, that our converted rifles, compared to the Turkish weapons, were good for nothing. In the same way our troops crossed the Balkans with nothing but Krenke rifles in their hands, while tens of thousands of Peabodies lay in piles in the snow all the time that I was at Plevna (nearly a fortnight), with boxes full of cartridges. Vast numbers of the latter were strewn on the road and beside it for a distance of several miles, and, as nobody thought

of collecting them, they exploded in quantities as the baggage-wagons passed over them.

At the halting-place in the ravine we parted from Kuropatkin. The poor fellow, as I have said, was conveyed over the same terrible roads back to Gabrovo. It seemed as if a tear glistened in Skobeleff's eye, but he pulled himself together quickly—"Colonel Count Keller, you will undertake the post of chief of the staff?" "Very good, Excellency." "There is promotion at once," said Kuropatkin dryly, as he was carried away. His loss was deeply felt by us all. To Skobeleff it was, as he said, irreparable.

It is strange how a wound will often change a man suddenly and completely, sometimes imperceptibly to himself or others. Kuropatkin is carried in a litter over these impracticable roads through the pass; he is, of course, constantly shaken—thrown first to one side, and then to the other; sometimes even he is dropped right into the snow, so that his strong nerves can scarcely endure it. He meets the cavalry on their march, and in conversation with their colonel he says, among other things, "It is a devilish road; I do not know how you will get across." The colonel of the regiment, impressed by these words, forgets that he is not speaking to the chief of the staff but to a wounded man; he halts his regiment and sends Skobeleff a report of the insurmountable difficulties of the road. But Skobeleff gets angry, and is beside himself at the long delay of the cavalry. He naturally at once gives orders that the march is to be continued at any price.

If a wounded soldier brought from the battle-field is asked how matters stand there he generally answers; "Badly, sir. We are getting the worst of it; they are giving us a beating; they are too many for us." *He* is worsted, *he* is beaten, and it seems to *him* that *everything* is lost. It appears to me that it ought to be a rule that no wounded man, from the private to the commander-in-chief, should be allowed to remain at the front, extreme cases, of course, excepted.

* * *

Skobeleff seemed, as it were, thrown off his balance by Kuropatkin's wound. Taking me aside, he constantly asked: "What do you think of my arrangements, V. V.? Is it all right? Count Keller is a good officer, but inexperienced. I

am afraid that there may be some confusion." I tried to calm him by saying that it seemed to me that at present everything was going on as it ought. "Have you occupied the heights which command the pass?" "Yes, the men have marched off already." "Have you given them orders to entrench themselves?" "Yes." "Be sure that they carry out the order." It still makes me laugh when I think how the brave orderly, X., who was dispatched with this order, on seeing soldiers on the heights, took them for Turks.

But Skobeleff with his nervous nature could not be easy. "You have been with Gourko, Vassily Vassilievitch: tell me, on your honor, was there greater order under him than under me?" "No, I think not; but he was calmer." "Am I, then, so very impatient?" "Oh, just a little; see how you have sent several orderlies to one and the same place with the same orders."

I remember another scene at Plevna. Just after I had returned from the guards' quarters, in friendly conversation with an officer, I was defending Gourko against various unjust attacks. Skobeleff was present at this conversation. Very jealous of Gourko's independent position, for the latter had nearly a whole army under him, he caviled at my impartiality, and growled sarcastically, "Well, now you have found a great warrior."

Not long after, Laskofski, the commander-in-chief's aide-de-camp, was slightly wounded.

The general had ordered Colonel Paniutin to drive the Turks out of the trenches which they held below the road which led from the pass; in the evening General Stoletoff took the village of Imetli. We passed the night in our ravine round a fire which we were scarcely able to keep alive with the damp twigs. Here were Skobeleff, Stoletoff, Laskofski, myself, and Skobeleff's aides-de-camp; I do not remember whether Count Keller, who had a great deal to do that night, was present or not.

Our gallant correspondent, M. D., was not there; he was probably down in Imetli. I do not know whether Skobeleff slept—perhaps he was able to sleep even here; but as for myself, though fatigue overpowered me from time to time, I never really slept. We did not eat anything, but only drank a glass of tea each. Laskofski with his wound was particularly badly off, for although he was wrapped in a fur

cape he lay on the snow without any blanket. In the morning he got up with us to view the Turkish positions; but I obliged him, by main force, to go to Gabrovo to the hospital tent.

The morning was wonderfully beautiful; the little Turkish detachment at first stood at the foot of the hill, as if it would prevent our descent; but presently it retired—the enemy, it seems, was by no means distinguished for decision. Now the Turkish cannon were pointed at us, and opened fire. We could not reply, for we had no guns with us. Skobeleff was informed that it was impossible to bring up our artillery over these roads. I advised him to order that one piece at least should be brought down at any cost; the others might be left on the top. In the meantime an attempt was made to answer with our little mountain-guns; and though their fire apparently did little execution, it doubtless produced a moral effect, by reminding the enemy of their presence in our detachment.

Skobeleff begged me to make a sketch of the scene, that he might add it to his report. As a good deal was hidden from me at the spot where we stood, I went down a little way; but the bullets whistled round me in such great numbers that I made my sketch in a great hurry, merely dashing in the outlines. The Turkish detachment was again drawn up down below. I should have liked to draw several things, but I suddenly found that I had not my note-book with me—a book which was full of notes and sketches from the time of Plevna and Gorny-Dubnia down to the last few days. Pondering in my mind where I could have lost it, it occurred to me that the last time I had had it in my hands was when I saw Kuropatkin after he had been wounded; his wound had so upset me that I had left the book lying in the snow. I rushed to the spot, but found nothing; which was scarcely to be wondered at, as a great number of infantry and cavalry had passed over the place. Now I saw what a number of men and horses had fallen at this spot yesterday, chiefly during Skobeleff's memorable reconnoissance. One soldier had been knocked off the road, and the shell-splinter had gone through his body and chest. My note-book, however, was not to be seen anywhere. "It is probably crying, with all its notes," was the idea that passed through my mind.

At this moment I met an aide-de-camp of the Vladimir regiment whom I knew. "Do you know," he said, "that they have found a note-book belonging to your late brother? The Turks must have taken it from the body and brought it here to Imetli." "It is most likely my note-book, for which I am looking," I cried. "In whose hands did you see it?" He named an officer of the Don-Cossack regiment. I rode off at once to find him out. The regiment had already descended in its full strength, and was being drawn up by Skobeleff. At last I regained possession of my precious book. It turned out that a soldier had picked it up on the spot where I had dropped it, and had taken it with him to Imetli, but had dropped it again by a well in the village; there it had been found by a Cossack, from whom it passed into the hands of the officer.

* * *

I returned to the place of our bivouac. It was very hot, and the snow was thawing. The soldiers stopped to drink tea; I sat down by one of them, who kindly offered me some—not indeed out of a cup, but out of the lid of his cooking-pot. I learned from talking with him and others that the soldiers were very badly treated in the matter of tea, and still more of sugar; they did, indeed, receive for a certain number of days the regulation number of pieces of sugar; but these pieces were so microscopically small that they could just be seen and nothing more. Before this, when I was with Gourko's Guards, I had been astonished at the lavishness with which the commanders of the different divisions and the hospital authorities supplied this or that general, or officers' mess, with whole poods and loaves of sugar—often as many as three and four loaves. I had intended to tell Skobeleff about it, and to ask him to turn his attention to the matter; but, to my great vexation, I had quite forgotten to do so. On the whole, under Skobeleff, everything which concerned the care of the troops was arranged, comparatively speaking, in the best possible manner. He had spoken strongly to some of those who had the chief authority in these matters, and they on their part had dismissed some of their subordinates for failing to make proper provision; and if I had not forgotten at that time to tell

him about it, the soldiers would probably have received more sugar for the rest of the campaign.

I found Skobeleff in conversation with Prince V., commanding one of the divisions of the Bulgarian militia; he brought the news that even to bring *one* field-piece over that road was impossible; he said, further, that the advanced guard of Prince Mirski's detachment had come down into the valley from the other side of Shenovo, and that it could be seen from the pass. We could perceive in the distance, on the white expanse of snow, little black lines—regiments which were moving towards Shenovo, *i. e.*, marching against the Turks; the booming of the guns could also be heard.

Skobeleff inquired of Prince V. what troops he had met on the way. Two regiments of the infantry division had already come down; the third regiment was in the act of descending; the whole of the cavalry, with the exception of one Cossack regiment, was still on the way.

"How soon do you think, Vassily Vassilievitch?" asked Skobeleff of me, "will Mirski's detachment reach Shenovo?" "Within two hours, or two hours and a half, if the Turks let them." "Then ride to Paniutin and tell him to advance to the trenches." I galloped off so quickly that my poor nag must have thought I had gone mad to ride at such speed on such roads. While still a long way above I shouted down, "Colonel Paniutin, advance!" He was delighted at the order, took off his cap, crossed himself, and exclaimed, "Thank God!" and went forward so rapidly that by the time I reached him by the very winding road he had already passed the trenches. "The General gave orders to advance only as far as the trenches at present," I called out to him:

"We have already passed them."

Suddenly Skobeleff came riding up to me at full gallop. "Vassily Vassilievich, you have told the troops to advance?"

"Yes: shall I call them back?"

"No, no; I was just going to push them further forward. Go on; I will give you the signal to halt presently."

A terrible load of anxiety was taken off my mind. The shots from the direction of Mirski's detachment followed each other more and more quickly; the hurrahs of our men could be heard in the distance, mingled with the Turkish cries of Allah! The battle had evidently begun, and we had to hasten to give assistance.

Skobeleff was enraged that so few troops had yet come down. In spite of his dispatching one orderly after another to bid them hasten, the cavalry came down very slowly, and barred the way to part of the infantry. The nature of the road, however, made it impossible to blame them.

As part of the detachment was to be kept in reserve, Skobeleff had as yet but a ridiculously small force (in fact, no more than one regiment of infantry) available for an attack. Anxious, therefore, as he was to render help, he was obliged to wait. In order, however, to divert the enemy by a demonstration, he put his men in position, and pushed forward the mountain artillery, whose fire fell just short of the mark. The back wheels were sunk a little into the ground, and the shot now fell directly down upon the enemy's batteries. I confess that I persuaded Paniutin to let our single regiment salute this success with two vigorous cheers. Three Turkish guns replied to our fire: the enemy was evidently preparing for the attack expected from our side, and a chain of mounted Tcherkesses was pushed forward along the whole village.

We were now quite close to Shenovo, and thus naturally diverted half of the enemy's force, and proportionately diminished his power of resisting the other detachment. Skobeleff resolved to assemble all his forces before delivering a decisive blow the next day. This resolution seemed not to please the detachment. When Skobeleff told Paniutin that he would attack the Turks the next day, the latter answered, "Alexey Nicholaievitch (Kuropatkin) is no longer here, Your Excellency; it is not likely that any good will come of it." "That does not sound very complimentary," said Skobeleff. "Have patience; you will find another opportunity." For myself, I was convinced that this was the most sensible plan.

* * *

It was already growing dark. The General had given orders that at nightfall the troops should retire; and I advised that fires should be lighted along the whole line of the ground they had occupied, in order to make the Turks uneasy by the apparent proximity of our advanced guard.

The other detachment also kept perfectly quiet. We learnt afterwards that there had been a fierce engagement in the course of the day. Skobeleff felt that it must be so, and, as I was with him the whole time, I saw what it cost his nervous

excitable nature to restrain himself on that day and not to rush into the fray. We were often alone ; he constantly drew me aside, animated by the desire to tell me his feelings frankly. "What do you think? Was it right to postpone the assault to-day? I know they will blame me for it ; they will say that I purposely did not hasten to give help. Very well ; I will retire from the service : as soon as the war is over I will immediately retire."

"Why do you talk of retiring?" I said, trying to calm him. "You have done what you had to do—what you were able to do. You have diverted part of the enemy's forces ; to risk an assault with only one regement was not to be thought of." Stoletoff came up, and concurred in my opinion that it would have been extremely rash to have attacked such a strong position with the force available. Skobeleff seemed to be somewhat reassured ; but his military spirit whispered continually to him that when fighting was going on, one ought to rush into it. He recurred several times to the same topic, and said, "that he could not, and ought not to have acted otherwise," and "that he should throw up his commission if they blamed him for it," &c. I advised him to send an aide-de-camp at once to Radetski to report what had been done, and what remained to be done to-morrow, and to ask for his instructions, if they were needed. "But it is impossible to ride off now to Radetski and to be back by the morning." "It is quite possible : send Dukmassoff—he is a gallant officer ; tell him that he must be back to-morrow early. If he accomplishes his mission, give him a decoration ; if he does not put him under arrest."

I went in quest of Dukmassoff, and told him he was to prepare at once for a ride over the mountains ; and the brave fellow, without the slightest sign of reluctance, went into his tent to get ready. In the course of twelve hours to ride twice over the Balkans, and, moreover, to climb up to Radetski's position, was, to say the truth, almost impossible ; but Dukmassoff accomplished it in sixteen hours.

Skobeleff made the rounds of his troops, and ordered them to entrench themselves well, as if a serious attack were in prospect.

We returned to Imetli to take up our quarters for the night. Bivouac fires were burning brightly along the whole line of our former position in front of the enemy.

The village furnished plenty of hay, but was badly off for dwelling-houses ; all the houses had been knocked to pieces and destroyed. Unfortunately for me, the mounted Bulgarian who acted as my attendant, and whose horse had been killed, getting tired, I suppose. of dragging my things after me, had either sold them or thrown them away. The former is the more likely, as I never saw either him, or my revolver, or my field glass, or my other belongings. I most regretted the revolver, as it was one of the few things that I had been able to secure out of the effects of my brother, who had been killed at Plevna.

After I had wandered about a little on the heights between the fires, in search of my Bulgarian, I went tired and hungry, to Skobeleff's cottage. He was not there. I strolled about for a time, and then went again to him. Still he was not there. "I will wait for him, at any rate," thought I, "for there is nothing to eat anywhere else." "He must soon come," said the Cossack ; "his supper is waiting for him."

At last I hear Skobeleff's step by the fence. In the darkness he knocked against the Cossack, and being out of temper (owing, I suppose, to the occurrences of the day), gave him a violent blow, that felled him to the ground. "Why do you come running between my legs, you clumsy brute ? What ! " as his eyes fell on me, "is there somebody else there ? Oh, it is you, Vassily Vassilievitch ! Well, forgive me, old fellow : embrace me, and don't be angry. Come, V. V., let us have a chat over our supper. And you boy," to the Cossack, "bring us a bottle of champagne."

Skobeleff was no tippler, and I never saw him the worse for drink, but he was very fond of champagne. In Plevna he assured us, as I well remember, that the bottles we were then drinking were the last, and that he would not drag a single bottle with him over the mountains ; but this was evidently only a stratagem of war, for now there was another bottle after all and to-morrow there will probably be yet another if we give the Turks a good beating. My comrade, however, was a little out of humor : on the one hand, because he was haunted by the thought that he had not checked the Turks, and that he would be accused of purposely causing Mirski to fail ; and, on the other hand, apparantly, because I had been an involuntary spectator of his assault upon the Cossack. Our talk

turned again on the folly of attacking with an insufficient force, &c.

I did not know where I should pass the night, when by accident I came upon a cottage which was occupied by Skobeleff's orderlies. I found a bright fire on the hearth, before which we laid ourselves down, without any ceremony, and slept soundly. They were young fellows, by no means fashionable, and not to be compared, as far as appearance went, with the dandies of Gourko's staff; but, to make up for that, they were brave and gallant men, who had stood many a shower of bullets.

The next morning, before daybreak, I went to the advanced guard. The weather was misty. The bivouac fires began to die out. Skobeleff was in no hurry to begin the struggle; he was perhaps waiting for Dukmassoff and Radetski's orders. It was already bright daylight when I ascended one of the neighboring heights with Charanoff, who had been told off to observe the enemy's movements; every quarter of an hour I wrote reports for him to Skobeleff on what we saw in front of us. The mist began to clear, but the mountains were still half-shrouded, and the Shipka was not visible at all. Now, as also during the whole night, single shots, at longer or shorter intervals, were heard from the valley and from the Shipka. As on the previous day, the Tcherkesses formed a chain round the village; the guns were silent. Both sides were evidently in a state of expectation, and preparing for the coming battle.

Presently, on the farther side of Shenovo, where Mirski lay, the firing began to grow sharper. On our side everything was quiet. We had a good laugh with Charanoff over our fears of being cut off by the Tcherkesses. There were three or four of us. We had ventured out a long way in front; the mist had not quite cleared away, when we saw ten or twelve dark bodies, who approached us from the Shenovo side, stood still, looked round, and then strode off in a direction which would soon place them between us and our friends. We were already preparing to retreat, in order not to be cut off from the main body, when the mist lifted and we saw—some large dogs, who were seeking the remains of the soldiers' meals.

It was as well that I had refrained from reporting to Skobeleff that a party of mounted Tcherkesses, &c.; he would

have had a fine laugh at our expense. His laugh was loud and clear, with a curious gutteral sound — Kha ! kha ! kha ! "

On the further side the firing steadily increased. It was evident that another fierce struggle was beginning there ; and I had scarcely had time to write to the General and suggest reconnoitering in the direction of Shenovo, when his orderly appeared in the distance. He sent us orders to retire, and at once began the battle.

Of our heavy field-pieces not a single one had arrived ; the Bulgarian militia put forth all their strength, but yet could not accomplish anything, though I think that, under Gourko, one or two guns would nevertheless have been brought up ; he would have given orders to pull them up by the teeth. We had to confine ourselves again to our mountain guns. On the other hand, the whole of the cavalry had come down—*i. e.* a regiment of Moscow dragoons, a regiment of St. Petersburg Uhlans, and two regiments of Don Cossacks. Of infantry there had come down one rifle brigade, the Bulgarian militia, and the Uglitch, Kasan, Susdal, and Vladimir regiments of the 16th division. The two last-named regiments had suffered great losses at Plevna, and remained this time in the reserve.

The rifle brigade and the Bulgarian militia advanced first, in order to fall on the right flank of the enemy. A terrible fusilade began.

Dukmassoff also appeared soon after with a cheery smile but a badly damaged face. He had had a fall on the way and had knocked his face against a tree. " Radetski approves of all that I have done," said Skobeleff to me with an air of satisfaction, showing me a letter he had just received.

Here too came an orderly from General Mirski with the news that he had fought a severe battle, and that he had taken the village of Shipka, but that no one was supporting him. I was particularly astonished at the news of the taking of the village of Shipka, which was evidently added to improve the story ; for one of Skobeleff's orderlies had been there that very morning with a sotnia of Cossacks, and had not found a soul. I drew Skobeleff's attention to this point. " Ah, Vassily Vassilievitch," said he, " that is it, of course ; but, nevertheless, I am bound to accept the statement when I have it in writing from an adjutant-general of H. M. the

Czar." The cavalry were commissioned to turn the enemy's position, and cut off its communication with Kasanlyk.

* * *

From the left flank, which had opened the attack, a number of wounded were moving to the rear. Soon, however, it was evident that the others also were beginning to retire. I could not believe my eyes. Hundreds of soldiers are forced back! they turn, they flee—the whole detachment begins to waver—it is no longer possible to doubt it; they are repulsed! "Michael Dmitrievitch," said I to Skobeleff, "our men are utterly routed." "That does sometimes happen," he answered with a strangely playful smile. He at once called Paniutin with the Uglitch regiment. "Advance, in God's name!" he commanded. Paniutin answered, "Very good, sir," took off his cap, crossed himself (the whole regiment following his example), and did not wait to have the order repeated. "His fingers have been itching for a long time," said Skobeleff to me; "and if Paniutin is beaten back, I will lead the men into action myself."

I have taken part in many battles, but I must confess that I had never seen a fight carried on with such precision. "Jews to the front!" commanded Skobeleff (which meant: "Music here!" because almost all the musicians were of the Jewish race). To the sound of the music, with colors flying, and with a step as regular as on the parade ground, one battalion of the Uglitch regiment followed another, cheerfully responding to Skobeleff's greeting. This Valley of Roses might have been taken for the Field of Mars at St. Petersburg on a parade day. To the sound of the marches played by the regimental band, the troops advanced to the attack, while the reserves played the national hymn and an evening prayer resembling a chorale, just as if it had been some military festival! I remember that one battalion of the Vladimir regiment was marching with a furled banner. I rode up to the aide-de-camp and begged him, in the General's name, to unfurl it.

Skobeleff afterwards said that he had been "clever" that day because he had kept out of the fire; but that was one of his peculiar expressions, for, as a matter of fact, shells and bullets fell in showers upon us. The Turks directed their projectiles chiefly at the reserves and at our group. About

five shells fell so close to Skobeleff that he could not refrain from turning impatiently upon the Cossacks who had collected together near us with, "Why the devil don't you separate? You will all be killed!"

The indefatigable Count Keller had ridden off to deliver some order or other, and I in consequence had to write down some of Skobeleff's orders. I remember that he directed me to alter the concluding sentence of an order addressed to the commander of the cavalry—a sentence in which I instructed him to advance boldly. "He is an old general; I cannot write to him like that," said Skobeleff. I had been moved to add that sentence by the fact that we had seen how one of the cavalry regiments, in the midst of which a shell fell, turned aside and moved on at a slower pace. I further remember that in an order to General Mirski I forgot to put down the date and hour, at which my friend was very angry. Fortunately Count Keller came up at this moment. "Why are you never here when you are wanted!" cried Skobeleff. "Write quick." I was glad to have gotten off so easily, and began to draw energetically, which was much more to my taste than writing.

When Skobeleff sent X. to Paniutin with the order to begin the assault, I, who was standing by Skobeleff, added, "And tell him to draw the reserves closer to him." Skobeleff turned upon me again. "I cannot possibly teach him his business just when he is going into action," he said. But I thought to myself, Why not? Later, about a year afterwards, I met Captain K. of the rifles, and asked him why they had been driven back. He answered me exactly in the following words: "*Because the reserves were too far off.* The soldiers went into action well, but met with strong resistance, and, looking round, missed their supports and began to waver."

It is worth noticing that this mistake is often repeated, and can naturally only be attributed to the reluctance of commanders to expose their reserves to a heavy fire. On the part of Skobeleff, who, when the state of affairs needed it, never spared his men, it was simply inadvertence.

Paniutin went boldly at the enemy: he approached the Turkish trenches in close order, without firing, merely from time to time ordering his men to lie down. "Just look at Paniutin!" I said to Skobeleff: "I thought he was better

at talking than acting, and now he proves himself a regular hero."

"Let me tell you," returned Skobeleff, taking his field-glass for a moment from his eyes, "that Paniutin is a tempestuous soul."

I can still distinctly see Skobeleff as he stood that day in the snow, in his open overcoat, following the course of the battle attentively with his field-glass. From time to time, without changing his position, he gives this or that order, or, if the shot whistle too sharply round him, sends the Cossacks with their horses to the devil; his general's *guidon* attracts the particular attention of the enemy, and the *guidon* also is sent to the devil.

I made a little sketch of the general position of the troops engaged on either side, and remember that while I was drawing a fragment of a shell rolled close up to the chair on which I sat.

In front of us, like a blue line, stretched the oaks of the village of Shenovo, from which the smoke of the cannon and musketry fire rose continually. On the left heavy white clouds concealed the Shipka; but the booming of guns and the crackling of muskets were to be heard from that quarter also. It was evident that Radetski too had made up his mind to attack.

The Kasan regiment hastened to the support of the Uglitch: they had to attack the Turks in the center, to the left of Paniutin. "Go on, brothers, in God's name, and make no prisoners!" called Skobeleff to them. "We'll do our best, Your Excellency," was the reply.

"Make no prisoners" meant, in plain language, "Cut everybody down without mercy." I reminded Skobeleff of those words the next day. "Did I really say that?" he asked. The Uglitch and Kasan regiments drove the Turks completely from their positions. It is common enough, in a picture of a battle, to see the commanding officer lead a regiment with the colors in his hand: this Paniutin actually did, and it was mainly through his efforts that the battle was ultimately decided in our favor.

It is worthy of notice that this same Uglitch regiment, on the day of the assault—on August 30—during the third attack on Plevna, established itself so firmly in the vineyards that it could not be induced to leave them. To such a

degree does the bravery of the soldiers depend on the courage of their leaders.

The battle was evidently won. Skobeleff now seemed less nervous; he laughed and joked. When General Stoletoff came up to him, I whispered to Skobeleff that he ought now to make friends with him; and although the elderly Stoletoff at first laughingly refused to conclude a treaty of peace, they nevertheless finally embraced each other. Stoletoff had come up to Skobeleff while the fusilade was still going on, and had said something to him, upon which the latter had answered impatiently: "Leave me alone!" "What reason had you for being so brusque to him?" I asked Skobeleff afterwards. "He was not in his right place," answered Skobeleff; "when his troops are attacking, his place is with them and not with me. I do not like that kind of thing." On that day, however, my friend N. D. fared still worse. On his making some remark, Skobeleff said to him, "Vassily Ivanovitch, please go away." N. D. stepped back a little. "No—quite away, quite."

About two o'clock a Turkish officer who had been taken prisoner was brought in. He told us that all was lost on their side—that their whole force was in flight. This officer rode for several days afterwards in Skobeleff's suite, evidently much pleased at his treatment.

About three o'clock a Cossack galloped up to Skobeleff —"Your Excellency, the Turks have hoisted the white flag." Skobeleff and all of us mounted our horses and rode at full speed towards Shenovo. The nearer we got to the village the greater was the number of the dead we saw; the Turkish batteries were full of dead. The Turks had evidently remained to the last moment at their posts, and our soldiers had carried out Skobeleff's order to the letter—none had escaped with their lives. The Turkish trenches were likewise filled with bodies. It was strange that so very many dead were found in the trenches. The Turks had evidently been too eager, and had awaited our men *in front* of their fortifications.

After we had ridden through a portion of Shenovo we turned to the left towards the hills. N. D. was very nearly caught on a tree and thrown out of his saddle; but he was in the best of spirits in spite of it. A talented author, in war he was an indefatigable reporter, and contrived to be

present at everything that was going on. Though he was rather stout and solid in person, he rode quite a small mountain horse, which, according to him, possessed some peculiar qualities, one of them, and certainly not the least in importance, being the ability to carry a man of his figure.

Troops of prisoners met us. Skobeleff had been informed that the cavalry had taken prisoners six thousand Turks, who were retiring towards Kasanlyk. We also met troops of Russian soldiers, whose commander received a sharp reproof for their irregular marching.

We rode about looking for the Turkish commander-in-chief with the white flag. On the way we saw Paniutin, who had shouted himself quite hoarse, but nevertheless was making even more noise than usual ; in fact every one, from the highest rank to the lowest, was hoarse that day as if by orders.

All about us lay vast numbers of dead bodies and abandoned weapons. I was riding by Skobeleff, and I said to him : "Do you remember how you doubted whether you were doing right in waiting to collect your forces ? Now you see what you have accomplished — what a brilliant victory you have won. And yet, for all that, I must say that you were rather nervous." "Do you think so ?" "Certainly, although less than usual."

At last a colonel of rifles came with the sword of the Turkish commander-in-chief. "Where is he himself ?" "There, by that large mound." This mound was occupied from top to bottom by Turkish soldiers, who sat there in a state of apathy after throwing away their arms and ammunition. Down below there was a little wooden barrack, at the door of which stood, with a large suite, a Turkish general, not yet old, his brown hair tinged with gray and a serious expression of countenance. It was the Turkish commander-in-chief, Vessel Pasha. Skobeleff ordered them to come up to him. With a gloomy countenance Vessel Pasha approached, followed by other pashas and forty or fifty officers of different ranks. Skobeleff tried to comfort him with a few kindly words about the bravery of his soldiers ; but he listened with a sad face, and answered not a word. The whole suite looked on with equal dejection.

"Vassily Vasselievitch, ride quickly to General Tomilofski," said Skobeleff to me in a low voice, "and tell him to disarm the prisoners at once, without delay. I have intelli-

gence that Suleiman Pasha is hastening up from Philippopolis, and I am afraid lest the Turks, on the first news of it, might snatch up their arms again." I conveyed the order, with the explanation given by Skobeleff, and on my way back hastened to the top of the great mound to take the white flag as a remembrance ; it was a large piece of striped cotton-silk. I gave it to the Cossack X. to take care of, but he lost it. The Turks looked on with some apprehension while I took away the white flag : they probably thought that when it was gone they would all be cut down.

" Will the Shipka surrender ! " Skobeleff asked of Vessel Pasha. " I do not know." " What ! You do not know ?—you, who are the commander-in-chief ?" " Yes, I am commander-in-chief, but I do not know whether they will obey my orders." " If that is the case, the Shipka shall be attacked at once," cried Skobeleff, and ordered the Susdal and Vladimir regiments to move forward in the direction of the high road which led to the pass.

Hereupon there was some stir among the Turkish officers ; a few words were exchanged in Turkish, and then Vessel Pasha turned to Skobeleff, saying : " Wait, wait ; I will send the chief of my staff over there." A Turkish colonel was sent off on this mission accompanied by General Stoletoff from our side. Meantime, however, the brave Charanoff had already undertaken to inform General Radetski of the results of the battle.

Skobeleff was seriously afraid that the Turkish commander would perhaps offer resistance, especially as Bulgarians were bringing intelligence from all sides of a movement of Suleiman Pasha in this direction ; which proved later to be correct, though not exactly in the way we imagined. Suleiman did, in fact, move from Philippopolis ; but in so doing he was not taking the offensive, but was retreating before Gourko's detachment.

To say the truth, we scarcely regarded Skobeleff's threat to attack the Shipka as serious, nor, probably, did Skobeleff himself. The Turks must have been very much depressed if they really believed it. Our reserve brigade, consisting of two regiments, was not a force sufficient to inspire much respect in an attack on such fortified and snow-covered points, at a height of 6,000 feet.

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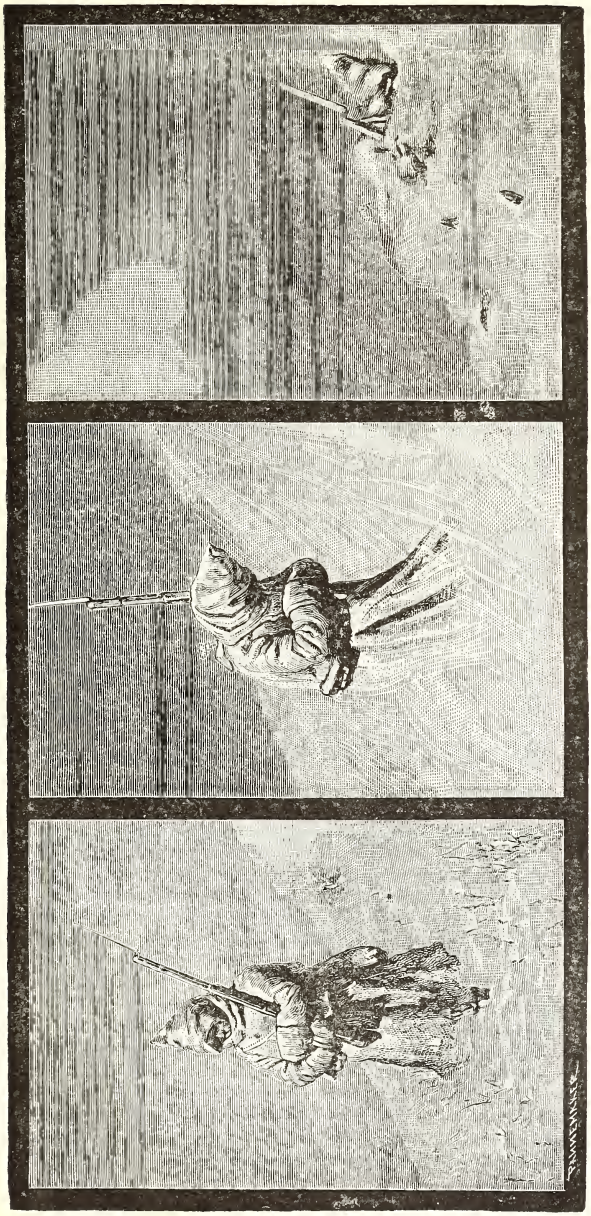

SHIPKA.

Skobeleff had sent out his orderlies on various missions, and some of them remained rather a long time away, so that I again had to convey several of his orders. When we rode towards the hills, Vessel Pasha began to move also, with his large suite, behind our brigade and behind us. At this moment there were with Skobeleff only a Cossack with the general's standard, N. D., and my insignificant self; and the Turkish officers were not a little puzzled at seeing the Russian hero, before whom they had laid down their arms, with such a miserable suite. They could scarcely believe that this was really the "famous white general;" at least the chief of the staff questioned me about Skobeleff's rank and distinctions. It seemed to astonish him very much that Skobeleff was only lieutenant-general, and not full general. I remember that this officer, when I delivered some order of Skobeleff's to him, looked at my half-military, half-civil costume, and turned to me with the words, "May I ask who you are?" "I am the General's secretary," I replied. I was then wearing a large Cossack cap, a short Roumanian fur coat with long hair; my feet were encased in huge boots; a sword hung over my shoulder. The officer's Cross of the Order of St. George was the only thing which a little counterbalanced the excessive picturesqueness of this costume.

While we awaited the answer of the commander of the Shipka the troops moved on to the hills to the sound of music, and were there drawn up. Skobeleff rode through the ranks, and spoke to the soldiers in the tone of a friend rather than of a commanding officer. "Now, you see, brothers, I always told you to obey your superiors. To-day you carried out your orders excellently, and have done your work well; let it be so in the future."

The Shipka surrendered, but the answer arrived late, and we rode away without waiting for it. On the way a comical sight presented itself. Dukmassoff, who had disappeared without leaving any traces some time before, was leading two large gray Turkish horses belonging to the artillery across the road. When he caught sight of Skobeleff he was embarrassed, and pulled the horses with all his might; but they, as if to spite him, did not obey. Skobeleff turned his eyes aside. We laughed.

The General took possession of Vessel Pasha's little

wooden hut. I rode to Imetli for my night's lodging, with a commission from him to take a greeting to the wounded commander of the first brigade of his division, General X. The command of the brigade had been taken temporarily by Paniutin. Count T. also was wounded in the hand; he filled the post of colleague to Stoletoff, who commanded the Bulgarian militia. All our troops had suffered severe loss. Paniutin lost out of his regiment, if I am not mistaken, about 350 men. The ranks of the Bulgarians, too, had been greatly thinned by the enemy. The Rifles, who had fought very bravely, lost still more. With regard to the Rifles, it must be observed that they form separate battalions and advance at the beginning of the battle, and consequently are at the front at the time of attack. Their losses are therefore always greater than those of other portions of the troops. This proportionately large loss of the Rifles in Gourko's Guards roused the Emperor's displeasure. It was decided to spare the Rifles more, *i. e.* to let them march to the front at the beginning of the battle, but only take part in the actual attack in case of necessity; though this is surely impracticable. The moment of attack is seldom decided exactly beforehand, but each commander generally chooses the proper moment, which is partly determined by the position of the enemy, and partly by the temper of his own troops. To withdraw the troops stationed in front at the very moment when they are getting keen is likely to have a very bad effect.

* * *

On the way to Imetli I saw in one place some soldiers busy with a big Turk. They were turning his pockets inside out and tearing out the lining of his coat. Now they took something up, and now threw it down again on the ground. The Turk was not yet dead: muffled sounds broke from his throat. What a strong Turk! If he had had strength, how he would have paid out the soldiers!

The battery on the nearer flank of the enemy is literally filled with bodies. My horse shies at the awful sight. In the trenches round the battery Russians and Turks lie mingled together, the number of our men being considerable. One body attracted my attention; the face, which was young

showed him to have been what one calls a raw youth. He was a volunteer. The body lay apart from the rest, the arms and feet stretched out, the eyes open. His boots—that most important article of clothing in a campaign—had been taken off, his pockets turned out, and a large number of letters lay about—the enemies who robbed him were not likely to care for these letters. But they had left him also the golden cross round his neck. I took up the letters and glanced at them to discover the name of the fallen youth. He was the son of a noble family in the south of Russia. All the tenderness of a mother was expressed in these letters: she blessed him over and over again, besought him to spare himself, told him of packages sent off with his favorite fruit-syrup, &c.

* * *

The figure of a soldier often appeared near me. He went to the bodies of the officers one after another, bent down, looked at the dead man's face, and went on. I followed him with my eyes. At last he bends down over a body and arranges and cleans the dress, puts the head straight, folds the hands on the breast and kisses them.

It was an officer's servant, who had found his dead master; for the last time he arranged his dress.

* * *

Late in the evening I entered the cottage where our young fellows were quartered; it was full of harness. The practical Dukmassoff had chosen out a complete team of three from among the horses taken from the Turks, and was now endeavoring to procure the necessary harness. "Where are you going to take that?" "Home to the Don," was his answer. I bought a small horse from a Turk, because mine, after the toils of the last two days, was not up to his work. Besides that, I got a complete Turkish equipment; it was to have a place in my pictures.

I forgot to mention that soon after Vessel Pasha had surrendered Skobeleff rode to Sviatopolk-Mirski, who had command of the other division. I rode with him, and saw that although the generals embraced and kissed each other there

was constraint between them. Skobeleff was evidently not pleased with the little comedy acted by Mirski on receiving him. We found the General siting in the open air at a table, which was, I am sure, put there to give a touch of solemnity to the reception, as if he had been about to hold a trial.

They told us there that the division had lost on the first day 2,500 men, and on the second day, as nothing was to be seen of Skobeleff, they were about to retreat (!). But just then music was heard, followed by loud cheering, musketry fire, and the thundering of cannon. It was Skobeleff's attacking column. So, although Mirski had to endure the first onset of the Turks and experienced a hard fight, his fate was evidently decided by Skobeleff.

* * *

On the following morning I came to Shenovo. They told me Skobeleff was looking for me. I found him on horseback, just ready to inspect the troops. We rode slowly apart from the others. The General observed that he had a favor to ask of me, and I must promise him first to grant it. "With pleasure." "The matter is this," he began; "gossip and slander are beginning. It is said that I purposely allowed the Turks to almost overwhelm Mirski, purposely refrained from giving help the first day in order to appear as a deliverer the second. Mirski is intriguing. He is simply a thief; for, do you know what he did? He went into my hut when I was away, demanded from my servant, Kurkofsky, Vessel Pasha's sword, and carried it off to give it up to Radetski. Is not that stealing?—for the pasha surrendered and gave up his sword to me. Mirski is older than I am, but only in years, not in rank; we are both commanders with equal rights, both under Radetski, not one under the other. You know, Vassily Vassilievitch, what happened: you remember that I made every effort to come to his assistance, but I could not imperil the success of the expedition to procure laurels for Mirski. Ride to headquarters, and tell his Imperial Highness the facts of the matter." "This commission is, I confess, very disagreeable to me," I answered. "I was always very cautious in my behavior at

headquarters; and although the Grand Duke was always friendly to me, he might say the matter was no concern of mine." "Do not refuse my request," said Skobeleff; "do it for me: you promised." "Very well," I assented, "I will ride off." I advised that meanwhile Tchaikofski, the officer from headquarters who was with Skobeleff, should be sent with the official announcement. I knew he was an honest fellow, incapable of slander.

During this conversation we had left the village. The troops were drawn up with the left flank towards Mount St. Nicholas, and the front towards Shenovo. Suddenly Skobeleff drove his spurs into his horse's flanks and dashed along at full gallop, swinging his cap high in the air and calling out to the soldiers, "In the name of our country, in the name of the Emperer, I thank you, brothers." I observed that there were tears in his eyes. The enthusiasm of the soldiers is difficult to describe. Caps flew into the air; they cheered as if they would never stop. Skobeleff said to me later that he had very nearly made a *faux pas*. As he uttered the words "In the name of our country," it fortunately occurred to him to add "in the name of the Emperor;" otherwise he might have been accused of Nihilism.

Soon after I rode through the mountains to Selvi. I was given a number of telegrams which I was to dispatch to Russia to relatives of the senders. I proposed to Vessel Pasha to send a telegram to Constantinople, and the chief of his staff gave me a piece of paper on which he had written in French, "After many bloody struggles to save the army, I have surrendered with the pashas and the whole army.—VESSEL."

N. D. started with me; he wanted to make observations on the Shipka in order to be able to send his newspaper as complete a report as possible of the course of affairs. I have seldom laughed as much as I did then. N. D. did not appear on his own horse, which was in need of rest, but on a tall thin Cossack horse from the Don, which Dukmassoff had placed at his disposal. "Where on earth did you get that animal from?" "I want to try it: Dukmassoff wants to sell it; it is a real Don horse," N. D. answered from his lofty perch. At the first step which the reputed Don horse took his character was gone; for when N. D. urged him to greater speed he began to kick; and the further we went the worse

SKOBELEFF AFTER THE BATTLE OF SHENOVA.

it got. I laughed until I cried, but N. D., in a rage, lashed his horse and exclaimed, "Just wait; I will teach you, I will do for you. What a rascal that Dukmassoff is! He would sell me this horse, would he? We shall see." His generally good-natured face was quite disfigured by his vexation. His steed began to turn round under his lashes; with head down, it turned about, moved its tail up and down, and kicked.

* * *

In the village of Shipka everything was destroyed except the church; not one house remained entire. We rode along the road up the hill. The deserted cannon stood on the Turkish batteries. The Turks were seeking out the most valuable of their possessions and putting them into their knapsacks, preparing to begin their toilsome march into captivity. At the highest trench, which was strongly fortified, I was startled by the terrible number of Russian bodies. None lay by the breastwork; which proves, contrary to the official report, that our men did not storm the Turkish fortifications themselves, but only advanced up to the broad ditch which had been made some little distance from the entrenchment, and there planted themselves.

From thence I sent my horse on to the road again, but began myself to climb up the rock at the same spot where in September, Suleiman Pasha undertook his fierce attack on the Shipka. The whole path was now thickly strewn with bodies. The stench was unbearable, for the snow scarcely covered the scene of horror. Progress was here so difficult that I admired the bravery of the Turks, who had climbed the steep ascent, obliged as I was to cling to the remains of bushes and regularly crawl through the ranks of the dead. I did not want to turn back, but I could not venture to go on; creeping over the bodies on all fours was hard enough, and there was such an odor that I felt quite ill. Fortunately a soldier appeared at the top of the rock.

"Brother," I called in a voice of despair; "help me." He came down, gave me his hand, and pulled me up to the rock, where I breathed freely.

In N.'s mud hut, with whom I was already acquainted, I found General Molski, and we opened a bottle of champagne to celebrate the victory. N. was not there, he had to take over muskets, guns, and flags, from the Turks.

In the evening I went into the mud hut occupied by General Petrushefski, also an old Turkestan acquaintance. I found with him Brigadier-General Biskupski, the chief of Radetski's staff, Generals Dmitrofoski and S., the latter an officer on the general staff, who was with Mirski during our flanking movement. The conversation was very lively. Although they were evidently cautious in my presence, I found that Skobeleff was severely criticised there for his victory over Vessel Pasha, although those present were his friends. S., who was with Mirski, was particularly vexed at Skobeleff, probably because he was his particular friend. I have often observed that after a battle, when the time comes for rewards, the best friends fall foul of each other. Skobeleff, besides, had incurred the censure of his friends for a long time because he had outstripped them. I took up Skobeleff's defense.

"Do you think that our attack led to nothing?" Dmitrofski finally asked me. "I do not think that. Your attack must have greatly alarmed the Turks; to be attacked on three sides must have driven them to despair. I believe that each day accomplished its work."

I had not time to visit General Radetski, for which omission he afterwards reproached me, and drove in a sleigh, which had been put at my disposal most kindly by Biskupski, to Gabrovo. A drive to Selvi would have been fruitless, because the commander-in-chief had moved his headquarters to Gabrovo. He was expected there that very morning. As soon as the Grand Duke arrived, I went to him. Skalon and Skobeleff's father met me. "You come from the detachment, from Misha!" they called out as they saw me, and took me to the Grand Duke. I related what I knew of the battle in the most conscientious manner. In order to discover what impression my incomplete narrative produced, I added that Skobeleff was blamed because he had not made the attack a day earlier; to attack with half our strength would, however, have been a great risk, apart from the fact that, even in the event of success, the greater part of the enemy's troops would have retreated and escaped, as we had no cavalry to hold them.

"That is certainly true," replied the Grand Duke.

I then told the elder Skobeleff that I had come to the Grand Duke at his son's request. "You ought to have told

the Grand Duke how many guns and colors have been taken; you only told him how they attacked to the sound of music." "I narrated the affair as I understood it; the Grand Duke will hear about the guns, and that sort of thing, which is so dear to you, without my assistance."

I learned later, in the course of conversation with Skalon, that the immediate conclusion of peace was contemplated. "Impossible!" I said. "I will tell the Grand Duke at once that it is impossible. Was it worth while to shed so much blood?" "Well, then, go and tell him."

I went again to the commander-in-chief, with whom Prince Tcherkaski was sitting. "Your Imperial Highness, I have a few words to say." "Certainly," replied the Grand Duke. Tcherkaski withdrew.

"Is it true that you are about to conclude peace?"

"Not I, my friend; but St. Petersburg intends."

"Evade the order somehow."

"It is impossible. If the order is given I make peace."

"It is not possible! In that case the war ought not to have been begun."

"What is to be done? I will do what I can; but I am afraid they will not ask me at all."

"Cut the telegraph wires: commission me: I will interrupt the communication. A peace which is not concluded in Constantinople is not to be thought of; at least it should be a peace in Adrianople." Skalon, who had come in with me, supported me.

"I will go as far as possible, be assured." With these words the Grand Duke dismissed me.

The Grand Duke ordered his horse, to go and visit the wounded officers in the hospital. As the hospital was quite close and the street was covered with ice, I persuaded him to go on foot; the people greeted him enthusiastically.

It must be confessed that the Grand Duke, in spite of numerous defeats and mistakes, was very popular. Besides, it was known in the army that he had to contend not only with the Turks, but also with various private interests.

I told him that I had ordered a number of Turks who had made a disturbance to be taken out of the hospital. He gave his approval. He talked for a long time with Kuropatkin and Laskofsky in the hospital. The following day he

had to cross the mountains to inspect Radetski's, Skobeleff's and Mirski's troops.

* * *

I passed the night with my brother, who was detained in Gabrovo by a wound in the foot, and then I started on my way back to Skobeleff.

On the Shipka there was such a snowstorm as it would be difficult to imagine ; whirling snowdrifts threw us down and obliterated the paths. Petrushefski and Biskupski begged me to spend the night with them ; but I would not listen to them, drank my tea, and continued on my way—a decision which, to confess the truth, I afterwards regretted, for the snowstorm was so violent that it was impossible not only to ride but even to walk. The wind was so strong and the road so slippery that I fell down continually. My Cossack also fell several times, and, worst of all, broke my paint-box in doing so. We descended the whole night, and early in the morning I reached Shenovo.

Count Keller, whom I met later, told me of an amusing incident concerning General Mirski. The story was only credible because it came from the lips of such a modest and brave officer. General Radetski, who was in command of an army corps, and had the chief direction of the whole Shipka army, was about to come down from the pass. Count Keller sent out a Cossack with orders to bring him word the moment the general left the mountains, in order that a guard of honor might be drawn up in proper time. When Radetski arrived, Count Keller, who received him with the others, saw that the men who formed the guard of honor did not belong to Skobeleff's division, which was the nearer one, but to Mirski's, which was the more distant ; he also saw the Cossack whom he had sent standing by the guard of honor. "Why," he called out to him, "did you not summon our guard of honor, which was in readiness?" "His Excellency did not give the order," he answered. It turned out that General Mirski had met the Cossack and learned from him what he was sent to do. He thereupon detained him, and in the mean time ordered a guard of honor of his own men to be drawn up.

I found Skobeleff busy with preparations for the recep-

tion of the commander-in-chief. He told me, among other things, that he had told Radetski how General Mirski got possession of Vessel Pasha's sword, and that Radetski had observed : " Do let that alone. How can you care about such trifles ? "

It gave me great amusement to watch Skobeleff's preparations for the reception of the Grand Duke, and to see how fearful he was of committing some mistake. He had no idea of what military etiquette required in the matter of sentries and parades. Believing that the Grand Duke would make the troops march past in line, he racked his brains as to how he should behave, how he should give his orders, where he should stand, etc. His only deliverer was his orderly, Homitchefski, an officer belonging to a regiment of the Yang Guards. " Tell me quicker ; where must the sappers stand ? " " At the head, Your Excellency." " Well, then, how have I got to give the word of command ? " " Your Excellency will then say," etc. When I saw with what seriousness he allowed himself to be instructed how to command, where to stand, etc., I could not help laughing aloud " What are you laughing at, Vassily Vassilievitch ? " Skobeleff asked, like an injured child. " How can I help laughing ? A general, before whom the Turks have laid down their arms, is learning a set of words like a school-boy ! "

Several times Skobeleff took me aside and asked, " Vassily Vassilievitch, tell me ; did the Grand Duke listen to your account attentively ? How did he answer you ? " and so on.

* * *

High up on the mountain a long line of dots became visible coming towards us ; it was the Grand Duke with his suite. Skobeleff's perplexity became more and more evident ; he looked quite miserable. I observed that he always had a very troubled expression when he had to receive people of high rank. Such a situation was evidently very disagreeable to him, because he was uncertain what would be said to him and how he would be received.

The Grand Duke arrived at the foot of the mountain where General Radetski awaited him. When he was still at some distance, the Grand Duke swung his cap in the air and called out, " Fedor Fedorovitch, hurrah ! " He embraced,

kissed and congratulated Radetski on his promotion to the rank of general of infantry, and decorated him with the Cross of St. George of the second class. Then the Grand Duke rode up to Skobeleff, gave him his shoulder to kiss, and—that was all. I looked at Michael Dmitrievitch. It is painful to me even now to recall the miserable, I might say helpless, expression in his face; sadly he rode behind the Grand Duke and gave confusedly the necessary orders. I was sorry for him and I was ready to say to the Grand Duke: "Look at Skobeleff. Either he has failed, or you do not understand what it costs a man like him to be passed over before everybody. At least have some pity for him; say aloud that he has done good service." The soldiers also seemed to feel the painful situation, for they received the Grand Duke with such a small show of enthusiasm, shouted hurrah so feebly and unwillingly, that the Grand Duke himself must have noticed the coldness of his welcome. I do not know whether he understood the situation. He rode through the lines and presently took his departure.

Skobeleff accompanied him, spoke some time with him, and then seemed more tranquil.

Skobeleff defeated and took prisoners a Turkish army. His immediate superior received for this act the Order of St. George—the highest military distinction; his colleague, the commander of the second detachment, although his attack was not a successful one, received the same order; but Skobeleff himself did not receive this distinction, because he was too young for the second class. Promotion was denied him for the same reason. Much later he was given, in common with many others, a *sword for bravery;* but, as he already possessed two such weapons, he had to choose between keeping the sword in its case, or wearing all three swords on solemn occasions, which would have been equally uncomfortable and unusual.

The Grand Duke expressed displeasure at several matters; among others, that a large number of our dead belonging to Mirski's force had not yet been buried.

The commander-in-chief rode to Kasanlyk, whither headquarters were transferred. I rode to Skobeleff, with whom I was to dine. His father was there; also General Struckoff and some one else. When I was leaving him in the evening I observed that he had not received the Grand Duke in a man-

ner worthy of him. That annoyed him. "What do you expect me to do? I shall not make the soldiers artificially enthusiastic, and order them to throw their caps in the air. He was coldly received because they did not want to receive him warmly. Do you think I am a ninny? Am I to salute Radetski with cheers? He has the honor: very well; but he might have found a kind word for me—he did not even thank me."

IV.

THE MARCH ON ADRIANOPLE—STRUKOFF.

1878.

When I spoke to the commander-in-chief at Gabrovo of the importance of capturing Adrianople, he gave me as one of the reasons against it, the fact that the commissariat sent in no provisions.

"We have no biscuits!" he said.

I forgot to tell him that Skobeleff had seized 450,000 pounds of excellent Turkish biscuits, beautiful and white, capitally baked and far superior to our own, and that it would be well to requisition them at once, as Skobeleff had allowed his men to take as much as they liked, so that cart-loads of biscuits had already been fetched away. When the Grand Duke left, I remembered the incident and told it to the chief of the staff, Nepokoytchitsky. He was so delighted at the news, that he would not believe me, but put spurs to his horse, and galloped off to find out for himself. As soon as the information was confirmed, the commander-in-chief was informed, and orders were given to advance. In the evening I dined with Skobeleff and Strukoff and Skobeleff's father. Strukoff invited me to join him on a cavalry scouting expedition to Germanli, whither he had been ordered by the commander-in-chief. I accepted, but was unfortunately prevented from joining him at once, that is the next day, because my Cossack had broken my box of colors in the Shipka Pass, the night before, during a storm that nearly knocked us off our feet, and I had sent it to Gabrovo to be mended; so I had to wait.

I rode off to headquarters, which were then at Kazanlik, and found them in the most miserable condition. Although the town had been almost burnt down, quarters were to be found, but there was absolutely no food. I thought of the plenty that reigned in Skobeleff's division, especially as regarded sweets, and I told General Stein that I hoped to be

able to send him some remnants. "Is it possible!" exclaimed with delight this worthy custodian of order and stomachs at headquarters. "Could you manage to do so at once? I will give you an escort of Cossacks." I rode back to the village with two Cossacks and gave them a pailful of apple jam, a pot of cherry jam, and half a sack of almonds. At this last item Skobeleff's orderly, Baranoff, demurred, for he was very fond of them, but at headquarters my consignment caused great joy. At last there was something to eat. I was told that at dinner the appearance of jam-pancakes produced a sensation.

* * *

I called on my friend Skalon, military secretary to the commander-in-chief, and begged him to let my brother Alexander, who was wounded on the 30th of August, and had not yet recovered, remain away from his regiment a little longer. The Grand Duke very kindly allowed him to be temporarily attached to his staff as orderly officer.

When I called on Skalon I found him busy with the dispatches for the Emperor concerning the latest military operations, the capture of a Turkish army, etc. Skobeleff was very anxious to send his chief of the staff, the gallant Count Keller, with the dispatches, and offered to do so, but as it was felt that if this officer were sent, the entire merit of the achievement would be ascribed by him to Skobeleff, S. was selected, an officer of the staff attached to Mirsky's division, Mirsky being very jealous of Skobeleff and more inimical to him than any of the other generals. I pointed out to Skalon that the report to the Emperor might, under these circumstances, assume a very partial character, and so Skalon, although by no means well disposed to Skobeleff, told S.: "Mind, my friend, remember that every word of your report will be made known to the Grand Duke; besides, another officer will be dispatched in addition to you, and he may make an entirely contradictory report to the Emperor, so don't allow yourself to be carried away." S. warmly protested against such suspicions of partiality to his incapable commander, but I am convinced that he did exactly as was suspected, and represented everything topsy-turvy, for Skobeleff received but a paltry recognition of his brilliant victory at Shenovo, and that only a long time afterward and

in common with a great many other officers. Trivial as the circumstance may seem, Skobeleff felt it deeply.

When we learned that Suleyman Pasha had been defeated by General Gourko and was retreating to Adrianople, Skobeleff was ordered to intercept him by forced marches. His division marched through Kazanlik, passed the Grand Duke, as if on parade, but with such giant strides that the men nearly tore their legs to pieces; the rear ranks were very much broken up, and the transport animals were still more straggling, the whole getting hopelessly clubbed.

The Grand Duke asked Skobeleff whether I was going with him. "I hope so," was Skobeleff's reply. I soon afterward took my leave of the commander-in-chief, and, in answer to his "au revoir," said, "at Adrianople." My prophecy was afterward fulfilled.

* * *

We marched on very rapidly, but accomplished the transit of the lesser Balkans with much difficulty; for the road along the pass was very narrow, and the least stoppage of a transport wagon entailed a halt on all the troops behind it. However, I believe the transit was a success; we lost neither men nor baggage.

In the evening we arrived at the town of Eski Zagra, situated at the end of the pass, and so battered to pieces by the Turks after the retreat of Gourko's division, that hardly any habitable houses had been left. It was nearly dark when I rode into the streets, which were lined on each side by a melancholy row of ruins. I had no idea where I was to pass the night, and much less where I was to dine. I looked into Skobeleff's quarters, and could see him through the lighted window, walking to and fro like a caged tiger, evidently in a rage about something; beside he had Colonel A. with him. Fortunately I met General T., a most charming man, who had the reputation, in Skobeleff's division, of being an arrant coward. At the present juncture it was more important to me to learn that he had a bench for me to sleep on, some native wine, and a fair supper. We spent a very jovial evening and had many a hearty laugh together.

T.'s brigade had orders to march immediately behind the cavalry, but as the officers dawdled away a few minutes, the cavalry marched on, and the infantry, not following imme-

diately, lost it : simply lost it—the darkness was so intense. There were several roads, but as numbers of horses had travelled over all of them in the course of the day, it was difficult to know what to follow. Poor T. was frightfully alarmed when he was informed that the time for starting had long since passed, but that no one could discover which road the cavalry had taken. With his food in his mouth he jumped up, buckled on his sword, and rushed out in the dense darkness to find the cavalry. To tell Skobeleff of this misadventure and ask his advice could not even be thought of ; as for such a slip he would have taken T.'s command away from him at once. In half an hour's time T. returned in triumph ; he silently took off his sword and sat down to resume his mutton. "Well, did you find them?" "Yes." "How did you manage it?" He looked at me compassionately, tapped his head with his forefinger, and said : "*Quand ceci appele tête tout—faire!*"

A statement which, of course, I did not dispute. T. was very fond of French, and spoke it very badly ; indeed, the above was far from being the worst specimen of his attempts in this direction.

As I said before, T. was considered a coward in the division, and this opinion was partly correct. At Plevna he commanded the Ouglitch regiment, which lay down in some vineyards during the third attack on Plevna and would not move out of them, owing, of course, to the want of courage of its commander, for at Shenovo this same regiment, under the leadership of the gallant Paniontin marched to the attack with distinguished heroism. Overcome by fear during this attack, T. reported himself on the sick list, and did not get well until Plevna fell. Skobeleff, who hated cowards, would have got rid of him, if he had not been such an accomplished flatterer. To his face and behind his back T. always and everywhere spoke of Skobeleff as "the bravest of men," as "an unprecedented hero," etc.; so that Skobeleff could not find it in his heart to be angry with him long. "What a coward that fellow T. is!" he would say, "how sick I am of him!" But nevertheless he bore with him, and even secured for him promotions and rewards occasionally, and that was all T. wanted.

* * *

Early in the morning of the next day, on leaving my

quarters with T., I met General Dokhturoff, who commanded the cavalry, and whom I had not previously known. He brought news from the front from my friend Strukoff, who stated that the bridge over the Maritza had been captured with several guns that protected it, and that a tabor (battalion) of Turks, holding an intrenched position, had been routed. The General was angry that the report came from Strukoff, who had been attached to the division by the commander-in-chief, and not from his own colonel of dragoons, who was in the van. "Just fancy that fellow, Strukoff," he said to me almost before he knew me; "he gets on everywhere. He has carried off the victory even here. It's too disgusting!"

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By daylight we could see still better how completely the town of Eski Zagra had been destroyed. Had it not been for an occasional pillar of smoke obstructing the view here and there, one could have looked across from one end of the town to the other. The Turks had wreaked their pitiless vengeance on the unfortunate Bulgarians who had given Gourko's army a hearty reception, in true Turkish fashion.

The road from here to Germanli was strewn with stragglers from the regiments ahead of us. As orders had been given not to drive the men on by force, but to allow them to rest whenever they felt tired, they were sitting about in couples, holding most mind-improving converse. But in the end Skobeleff's indulgence was justified; they all overtook their regiments in the evening or on the following morning; and thanks to their rest, the men were not ill on the march.

I was riding quite alone, my Cossack had lagged behind as was his wont. There was still a good deal of snow about, from underneath which, here and there, sheep were nibbling the grass. As our provisions had been very deficient, and as I did not know how they might turn out later on, I got off my horse, picked out the fattest sheep I could find, tied it to my saddle, and then pursued my journey. I was soon overtaken by Skobeleff, who called out: "What have you got hold of there?" "As you see, a sheep," I replied. "I am afraid there will be nothing to eat." "There will be plenty to eat in the front," he replied, "don't bother yourself with it; let it go." However, I did not feel reassured, and did

not let my booty go, although I afterward discovered that there were plenty of provisions in the front. "I say, Vassili Vassilievitch," said Skobeleff, " do you know Suleyman Pasha is marching on us ? "

" Where did you learn that ? " I asked.

" I have received most reliable information to that effect. We shall soon be going into action, don't lag behind ! " And with these words he galloped off. Knowing that Skobeleff often took for facts what he wished to believe, I did not place great faith in this supposed advance of Suleyman's and rode on leisurely, keeping my sheep in tow, which was continually darting sideways, nearly pulling off my saddle and seriously hampering my horse's movements. I did not give up the hope of viewing the whole campaign comfortably with my fat booty by my side, but on arriving at the next halting station I saw so many sheep running about, that I gave mine its freedom at once, after all my wasted trouble ! Our halt was at the railway station of Tirnovo-Semenli. The surprise that awaited me here made me think I was dreaming. On asking for the General I was shown into the waiting-room of the station where I found most of our officers sitting around a well-laid table, at which they had evidently enjoyed an excellent dinner, and where they were now drinking their coffee and smoking cigars. I was at once invited to join them, and dinner was brought me. Strukoff was particularly glad that I had at last overtaken him, and made me promise that I would stick to him in the future.

He told me after dinner all about his engagement. When he arrived with the dragoons the Turks set fire to the bridge, but his men extinguished the flames and occupied the bridge, securing it as a means of crossing the river. The reinforcements who came up and opened fire on the dragoons, did not distinguish themselves, they simply ran away after spiking their own guns. Thus a battalion of infantry fled before two squadrons of cavalry, and did not even succeed in burning down or blowing up the bridge committed to their charge. If they had burned down that bridge we should have been delayed in getting across the river, which was covered with floating ice, and Suleyman Pasha would have had time to retreat on Adrianople by means of the railway from Germanli. Of course it was to Skobeleff's rapidity of movement and Strukoff's gal-

lantry that the army owed the capture of this important point.

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We subsequently discovered that Suleyman kept sending off telegrams for railway carriages to convey his troops to Adrianople. These dispatches fell into Strukoff's hands. From them we gathered that the Turks, who were being pursued by Gourko from Philippopolis, did not expect us from that side also, and of course did not expect to find their retreat cut off. It must, however, be remembered that Skobeleff's infantry marched on an average about fifty miles a day; and Strukoff had covered nearly the same distance, two days earlier, with the Moscow dragoons.

In the course of our day's halt for rest all the stragglers returned to the ranks; there was scarcely a single case of sickness. Skobeleff was in excellent spirits, and ordered up the Jews to the bridge, for in the Russian army the bands are mostly composed of Jews. All were well fed for there was an abundance of provisions. Some of us, like Dukmassoff for instance, a Cossack of the Don and one of Skobeleff's orderly officers, celebrated the capture of the bridge with much festivity, he was so overcome that he had to be carried to bed.

Occasionally misunderstandings occurred. The hostess of the restaurant and station-hotel complained that her geese had vanished. I lost a beautiful Circassian scimitar, for which I should have been consoled had I thought its services would be enlisted against the enemy, but I fear it was sold for a few roubles to some commissariat official. I had to borrow a sabre from H. It was far from being as sharp as mine, which had additional value in my eyes, from the fact that my dead brother Serge had used it, and cut open a few Turkish heads with it whilst I was laid up wounded. The room in which I had placed my things, with the intention of sleeping there, was subsequently occupied by General D., and my cloak and sabre were carried off and so carefully put away that I had great difficulty in finding the former, but the sabre never turned up again; probably some officer's servant took a fancy to it.

* * *

The following day Strukoff marched out early, leaving

Skobeleff behind ; having promised to accompany Strukoff, I went with him. Soon we descried the little town of Germanli on the heights. A squadron or two of dragoons had been dispatched to this town the night before, but had been very badly received by the Bashi-bazouks, and had in return treated them with little ceremony.

The important news was brought us that Turkish emissaries from Constantinople had arrived at Germanli to open peace negotiations ; and that they wanted a safe-conduct to headquarters. Strukoff at once informed Skobeleff of this and asked him to send up some infantry as quickly as possible, delaying his reply to the emissaries, until the infantry arrived. It was well that the infantry were not slow in coming, for our dragoons were getting it rather hot, as the town was full of the enemy, among whom there were a large number of rediffs from Suleyman's army, which Gourko had routed.

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When we arrived the engagement was nearly over, and soon the enemy retired. We were at once led to the railway station, where we found, huddled up in their carriages, the worthy Turkish emissaries, Namik and Server Pashas, who had probably spent anything but a pleasant night amidst the yelling and shooting that was going on. The locomotive of their train was adorned with a white flag. Namik Pasha was an old friend of the Russians, for he had been to see us in the days of the Emperor Nicholas. He was not only an accomplished diplomat, but, as Minister of the Household, one of the intimate associates of the Sultan. The other, who was Minister for Foreign Affairs, was a comparatively young and evidently nervous man. Namik, a thin, dried-up old man, with a sharp nose, and eyes whose fire had gone out, a painted beard and most dignified deportment, wore a long, loose Turkish coat, and the inevitable fez. Server had a broad and animated face and a slight cast in his eye ; he was dressed in a worn-out sort of home-made black ulster, and had on india-rubber galoshes. He kept jumping up and plunging his hands in his pockets, or walking up and down the saloon carriage. Now and again he stopped short and fixed his eyes on us, moving his jaws nervously ; he gave constant evidence of excitement.

The arrival of a Russian general was announced and we were asked into the saloon. Strukoff represented himself as commanding the vanguard of the division, and introduced me as his secretary. We were both in coarse gray Cossack overcoats, and must have appeared savage enough, in spite of our French, in which language the conversation was conducted. Strukoff, with great tact, complimented the pashas on the courage of the Turkish troops, without saying a word of our victories. Besides, he gave expression to a perfectly just idea, when he told them that the more we were brought in personal contact with individual Turks, the more we respected their characters. Namik Pasha, that clever old man, easily led the conversation on to the battle of Shenovo, which had been so decisive for the Turkish army, and when Strukoff told them that I was present at it, turned to me with his questions. But Server Pasha could no longer restrain his impatience, and asked me: "Now frankly, honestly, is it really true that Weyssel Pasha could not have held out?"

"I can assure you, Pasha," I replied, "that he could not," and I took out my note-book and drew him a plan of the village of Shenovo, and of the positions of Weyssel, Radetzky, Skobeleff and Mirsky. I showed them how the two latter had turned the enemy's flank, attacked them, and compelled them to lay down their arms. (This sketch is still in my note-book.) A sort of groan involuntarily broke from Server Pasha, and he turned away to hide his tears.

* * *

The emissaries manifested a strong desire to continue, as quickly as possible, their journey to headquarters. "The train by which we have arrived, you will, of course, at once send back?" said Namik Pasha.

"I must first ask for instructions from my commanding officer, General Skobeleff," Strukoff replied.

"What do you want instructions for? The train arrived and is now under a flag of truce, and cannot, and must not be used for military purposes."

"I shall await my instructions," was the only answer.

"But I entreat you," implored the Pasha, "we are expecting the arrival of another train every moment, with presents of horses and carriages for the commander-in-chief from

His Majesty the Sultan, surely you are not going to detain that also?"

"I must ask for instructions."

I whispered to Strugoff that, as the train was indeed protected by a flag of truce, we had no right to detain it. "We don't want the carriages—we have some already—but we have no locomotive," he answered in a rapid whisper. "For a time, at least, I must detain them, till we are told what to do." These last words he pronounced aloud, assuring his auditors that after the receipt of instructions, he would not detain the train a minute. Alas! Skobeleff sent word to say that the trains were not to be allowed to return on any consideration, and it must be confessed that they subsequently carried our troops most excellently. But the pashas knew nothing of this, for by that time they had already left for headquarters, which were at Kazanlik. In the evening I called on them again, to warn them to keep a sharp look-out, as there were plenty of marauders about, Bulgarians as well Bashi-bazouks. On the following day we rode out to see them off. The pashas were in a closed carriage, to which we rode up to take leave of them, and to wish them a good journey and success in their negotiations. "Let us hope," said Strukoff, "that your journey will result in a speedy peace," and he shook hands with them in reply to their friendly but sad farewell. "And do not forget," he continued, "that we have a common enemy; I mean the one that led you with false hopes into your present difficulties, and then left you to your fate."

"That is true," Server replied, the tears again coming to his eyes.

The pashas drove off between two rows of soldiers drawn up in lines and spared from our very small force, who shouted out songs at the top of their voices, with a whistled accompaniment. Poor pashas! Skalon afterward told me that when the news arrived of the taking of Adrianople, in spite of the lateness of the hour, the pashas were immediately informed of it. These worthy people had frequently during their negotiations insisted on the fact that Adrianople had not yet been taken, and would not be easily taken, so it was decided to lose no time in letting them know of it. "We were on the best of terms with them, and when they were awakened in the night, they were very much aston-

ished, and asked what was the matter." "We have come to announce to you the fall of Adrianople," was the answer. They nearly wept—poor pashas!

* * *

GENERAL STRUKOFF.

I had a good deal to do. Strukoff received the command of a small detachment, which constituted the vanguard of Skobeleff's main body. As this appointment was made unofficially by Skobeleff himself, there was no officer of the general staff told off to him, and so my friend asked me to do all sorts of things, and I became his volunteer chief of the staff. I collected information and news from the natives,

and reported to Strukoff. Our principal scout was a Bulgarian, Khristo by name, who had enormous mustaches like a tomcat, was very fat, and handsome; he wore a jacket covered with lace and embroidery, enormously wide trowsers, and a gigantic sword, which had unfortunately never seen the enemy. He had formerly served as kavass, or guard-interpreter, to General Ignatieff at the Russian embassy in Constantinople, and had subsequently, during the war, been attached to headquarters, and had now begged to be allowed to accompany Strukoff as his interpreter. We learned that the army of Suleyman Pasha, having been beaten by Gourko, and finding it impossible to reach Adrianople by railway, had taken to the mountains and was retreating, without halting, in small parties of five, ten, and twenty men, and was completely demoralized. Had the energetic Suleyman succeeded in throwing himself into Germanli with the 30,000 men that he must have had at least, before our arrival, and had he had time to get to Adrianople after destroying the bridge at Tirnovo-Semyonli, Mustapha-Pasha and other places of minor importance, our progress to Constantinople would have resembled a little less a military promenade than it did. Here I cannot help saying that Strukoff's services, his remarkable, energetic and rapid descent, and his exemplary cavalry raid, have not received the recognition with us that, in my opinion, they deserve. I have, for instance, myself heard from officers of Gourko's army, that it was an easy matter for Strukoff and Skobeleff to march on in triumph when all serious opposition had already been broken down. But they completely forgot that, in the first place, all serious opposition was anticipated and prevented, and in the second, that Strukoff pushed on nearly to the walls of Constantinople, with only three incomplete regiments of cavalry and one battery, and that along the whole of his route he was continually pestered by Turkish infantry. Now, when it is all over, I cannot help reflecting with amusement on how our triumphal progress might have turned out, if we had run against one or two battalions of rediffs!

However, while awaiting Skobeleff's arrival, we found excellent accommodation at Germanli, plenty of wood and provisions, and our table was always excellent, that is to say, our soup was always good and hot—what could one want more?

* * *

I was requested by Strukoff to undertake two duties ; to keep the men from pillaging, and to disarm the inhabitants as we passed along. Unfortunately one of our dragoons had the luck to find 500 Turkish gold pieces, and as soon as this became known many others were seized with a desire to follow his example. Although we were stationed outside the town, the men slipped away into the houses on all sorts of pretexts, and looked for, and even demanded money. They pulled the feathers out of the feather-beds and pillows, and broke into a few wine cellars. Many complaints were reported, but the commanding officers rather shut their eyes to these offences, and did not punish them severely. I then went about the streets, and must confess that I soon got thoroughly tired out. I used to drop into a house by chance and find a lot of our men prying about in the corners, inspecting, and rummaging amidst the terrorized occupants. "What are you here for?" "We have been sent to look for quarters, your honor!" At first I believed this, but on discovering that it was all nonsense and only a pretext for getting hold of money and valuables, I drove them out without ceremony.

That they should carry things off, and drink what they could find, was not surprising, but some of them destroyed things from mere wantonness. On one occasion I remember seeing a crowd of fellows standing at the door of a vault. I came up, and found it was a vinegar cellar. The vinegar had been set free from a few barrels and was running all over the floor, and had flooded the cellar to a depth of about a quarter of a yard. In the centre of this lake stood a soldier bare-footed, his trousers rolled up, holding in his hand a plug which he had pulled out of the last barrel, from which the vinegar was spouting in a torrent. "What are you doing that for?" "Just to see how it runs!"

Guided by the complaints of the inhabitants, I went into different quarters of the town, and stopped disorders of all kinds. Sometimes even I heard the screams of women and children. I boxed the men's ears, knocked their heads together, and drove them out, only to find that the same kind of thing had commenced somewhere else.

The persons of the women were, however, respected. In a sort of open square I came upon some fifty or sixty Turkish women, old and young, huddled up together like chickens

with their heads close to each other, evidently praying. Strukoff ordered them to be placed in a separate building by themselves, and had them protected by sentries.

* * *

As regards my other duty, disarming the natives, that went along swimmingly, with less trouble than I had expected. Dreading the responsibility of carrying arms, the inhabitants brought me their weapons with reasonable honesty. And what extraordinary weapons they were! Arab guns, with long, thin bits of metal, and purely Turkish ones inlaid with mother-of-pearl and ivory, pistols, scimitars, and yataghans. I made a collection of the most interesting of these as material for new pictures, and some I destined for Strukoff, who had promised his friends to bring them something of interest from the war. But alas! I lost these things as easily as I got them. The cart on which our trophies were packed was robbed at the next station in the night, and so thoroughly, that within the cart not a particle of its contents could be found. It was evident that some one else wanted them more badly than we did. The Cossack in charge, who had carelessly dropped his gun, was shot through the body.

* * *

Skobeleff having received and sent on the emissaries of the Sultan, now arrived at Germanli. It was clear that he was tormented by the desire of finally crushing the remnants of Suleyman's army, or in other words, completing what had been left undone by Gourko, who, having beaten Suleyman in a few engagements was driving him before him. But Skobeleff deceived himself, inasmuch as Gourko had practically already defeated Suleyman, much more thoroughly than we had supposed, and the remnants of his army, as we had already been informed, hearing that we had cut off their retreat at Germanli, had fled to the mountains in small sections, and were quite demoralized.

Skobeleff was seriously thinking of marching to Khaskioy, to meet Suleyman.

"Strukoff tells me you are going with him, Vassili Vassilievitch?" he said.

"Yes, I am," I replied.

"You had better come with me," he said; "you know Suleyman is upon us."

"I assure you that you are mistaken. Suleyman has taken to the mountains."

"Well, now, fancy disputing with me, when I assure you that I have most reliable information. Panyoutin tells me that he has already had several outpost skirmishes with battalions of Turks."

I was somewhat disconcerted at such detailed information, but nevertheless replied that I would go on with Strukoff.

"Well, do as you please," said Skobeleff, but he evidently disliked my refusing to join him. I did not know then to how great an extent I was right, and how greatly Skobeleff had erred. He here committed one of the greatest mistakes a general can make, and mistook a crowd of Turkish emigrants, with their carts and luggage,—whom Suleyman in his fury had ordered to leave their homes and escape to Constantinople,—for regular troops and had attacked them. This mistake was brought about as much by Skobeleff's jealousy of Gourko as by the fact that these enormous caravans of Turkish families were escorted by the male population, the brothers, etc., and these, seeing themselves threatened by the enemy, very naturally formed into columns to defend their womankind. These columns were the battalions of Turks that Panyoutin and the Cossack commanders had reported to the general, and upon which he marched.

I was with Skobeleff when the colonel of a Cossack regiment reported to him that the enemy was "advancing."

"All right," said Skobeleff; "receive the attack!"

"We have already some killed and wounded, and thirty horses have been shot."

"All right. Wait till you have lost three hundred."

The colonel went away with his hand to his cap, but I could see it trembled. Practical Cossacks hate losing men and horses. I remember Kouharenko, who commanded a Cossack regiment, giving me his reasons for this. He was complaining to me at Plevna of the light-heartedness with which Skobeleff sacrificed his men. "Why, when I get back home with my regiment, the wives of the dead men will make me reponsible for their husbands. They will ask me

what I have done with them, and will reproach me for not having taken better care of them. Yet Skobeleff tells us to keep our column formation, and does not allow us to form into extended order. "Impress," he says, "impress the enemy! What is the good of impressing the enemy, if your men are mown down?"

On the road to Khaskioy the engagement began. After a fierce exchange of volleys, the cavalry and infantry charged, cheering. Here a most shameful scene ensued, which Skobeleff arrived too late to prevent. The gallant Panyoutin did not clearly distinguish whom he had engaged, and the enormous wagon-loads were charged with the bayonet. For a distance of some miles the road was covered with killed and wounded, not so much men, but principally women and children. Our fellows threw the people down from their wagons, and plundered their luggage and money, and when Skobeleff arrived he was horrified at the mistake he had made. His general orders to his division after this "action" were, of course, the sternest he had ever given. But it is perhaps as well not to dwell upon this incident.

Skobeleff came out to see us off on our way to Adrianople. Taking me a little on one side, he said: "Vassili Vassilievitch, see that Strukoff pushes on."

"Don't be afraid," I answered; "we won't waste any time."

* * *

And here I may say that I have never met an officer more attentive to discipline than Strukoff. He was the type of what an exemplary, methodical cavalry officer ought to be. He had a small head and thin face, so that his skin seemed to cover nothing but bone and muscle. He looked, in the words of one of his friends, who wanted to pay him a compliment, like a thoroughbred Arab steed. He had enormous mustaches, which he was continually nervously pulling, although he had the most perfect self-control, and scarcely ever lost his equable temper, which is of great importance in a commanding officer. In the army he was laughed at for being always everywhere, and for pushing himself. The wits used to say, "Wherever you spit there is Strukoff." But this witticism lost much of its point, from a saying of the retreating Turks, that wherever they retreated, there was Strukoff with his cavalry.

I was completely astonished at the energy and agility of this man, who looked as though it was as much as he could do, to keep his soul and body together. He used to rise very early in the morning, and always made his own bed. He drank no wine and did not smoke, and looked after his men and his horses as though they were his children. At night he would jump out of bed to receive the reports that were brought in, personally, and he would always have a kind word for the officer who brought them, and for the private, a tip from his own pocket. I can even now see in my mind's eye, my dear and gallant comrade, wrapped in a cavalry cloak, his hood on his head, mounted on his lean English horse—he had two English thoroughbreds during the campaign—his profile, in the dim light of a cold morning between the hours of four and five, bends down a little, the hood drops lower and lower, and at last bumps against his horse's mane. Sometimes I could not restrain myself, but burst out laughing at this process of going to sleep. He would then suddenly open his sleepy eyes and ask, "What?—what has happened? Oh!" And he would go to sleep again.

* * *

Our advance guard consisted of a little less than three cavalry regiments; the Moscow dragoons, the St. Petersburg Uhlans, and an incomplete regiment of Don Cossacks, with only one battery of horse artillery which was always getting stuck in the mud, and considerably impeded our movements, but which gave us authority and prestige.

The dragoons were under the command of Colonel Y., as charming and genial an officer as one could wish to imagine, who moved his portly figure on his magnificent ambling white charger, as comfortably as though he were in his arm-chair; and he loved his charger better than his own soul. Y. was much older than Skobeleff, who had served as a cornet in the squadron which Y. commanded. Now Y. had got a regiment, but his former cornet commanded the vanguard of the entire army. Their relations remained as friendly as ever, and Y. would have done anything for Skobeleff, except part with his ambling charger. Skobeleff, who had a weakness for white horses, soon noticed his magnificent animal, and approached Y. diplomatically through the

intermediary of Strukoff. "Skobeleff tells me you could do him a great favor." "Indeed! Whatever is in my power I shall be delighted to do for him." "Your white charger" . . . "On no consideration whatever. It is not worth your while to talk about it."

The Uhlans were under B., who, I was told, had once been a dashing officer and brilliant man of the world, but who was now a melancholy, soured, languid man, who distrusted every one. The recent and dramatic death of his beautiful wife just before the beginning of the war, was, they said, the cause of his strange transformation. Y. generally kept us company, that is Strukoff and me, but B. was more frequently alone or with some of his own officers.

L. commanded the Don Cossacks, and, although an aide-de-camp of the Emperor, resembled most Cossack commanders in the care of his horses. He was very smart at foraging, and understood discipline according to his own peculiar lights, for his men were continually implicated in some marauding scrape, and even in open robberies, but this did not prevent them from being capital scouts.

The commander of the battery I don't recall well to my mind. He was an officer of a venerable age, who served his country honorably in the present instance and in the absence of more warlike duties by dragging his guns from morning to night out of terrific quagmires.

Besides these V., a charming, broad-shouldered officer of dragoons, used frequently to come from his regiment to write general orders for Strukoff, and sometimes reports to his Imperial Highness, the commander-in-chief, from my dictation. And finally, to complete this description of the staff of our flying column, the Bulgarian, Khristo, whom I have already referred to, should not be omitted. He was one of those mustached and gilded kavasses in whom all Eastern embassies and consulates revel. Those wonderful mustaches and magnificent gold lacings secured him the awe and reverence of all he approached during the whole period of the campaign, and of course a portion of this respect was also reflected on us, and shed splendor and magnificence on the entire force which had in its midst so great and brilliant a luminary.

We had scarcely arrived at Mustapha-Pasha, after a successful day's march with only one halt, and had gotten off

horses when Strukoff was informed that emissaries from Adrianople wanted to see him. He ordered them to be brought to him at once. They turned out to be a Greek and a Bulgarian, who represented the population of their respective nationalities, and who invited us to come and occupy the town. The Turks, on hearing of an approach, had left, and had blown up the Imperial castle on the outskirts, which had served as an arsenal. (The explosion had been heard even by us. I subsequently learned that many beautiful memorials of ancient art had perished with this castle, among which was a celebrated hall, whose walls were tiled with blue crockeries.) They told us that Circassians were loafing about the neighborhood and causing great apprehension lest they should break into the town and sack it. As to the magnificent line of forts that defended the town, and which had cost the Turks such enormous sums, they had been deserted because they were not quite ready, and there was not a sufficient number of men for their defence.

Strukoff called a council of war composed of his regimental commanders and myself. He explained in a few words the state of affairs. There could be no doubt that the inhabitants of the town, afraid of being marauded, would be glad of our arrival, and we could take advantage of the panic and easily capture the town. But on the other hand, we had no infantry, and the approach of one or two, and especially a larger number of tabors or battalions of Turks, would place us in a very critical position, and might jeopardize our guns. The Bulgarians had informed us that an Egyptian prince had just marched past the town with a well-equipped body of African negro infantry of about 2,000 men. Besides this, the remnants of Suleyman's army were on the march to Constantinople, and were in the neighborhood in fairly large numbers, though in small detachments. Having explained all this, Strukoff asked the opinion of his officers. Being the junior in rank it was for me to speak first, and I advised advancing. Y. did not see his way give a decisive opinion, but seemed also to favor of an advance. But B. was most decidedly opposed to anything of the sort. "It is all very fine for those who have no responsibility to say we should advance, but what would we do if we should be attacked in the town? If we came upon infantry? And if, after having occupied the town we should

be suddenly compelled to evacuate it again? It is absolutely imperative that we should wait for General Skobeleff." The Cossack colonel did not give an opinion, but I still maintained that we ought to advance. Strukoff did not express his views either one way or the other, and the council was dissolved without our having accomplished anything.

Soon another messenger arrived from Adrianople, another Greek, armed to the teeth, and apparently under the influence of liquor. He informed us that he had been sent by the new governor of the town to ask the Russians to invest it. "What new governor?" asked Strukoff.

"Well, when the military governor blew up the castle and went away with his garrison, the Sultan appointed Mr. Fass to be governor. What more do you want?"

This emissary of the governor behaved so insolently that I asked permission of Strukoff to talk to him a little more severely. Strukoff granted it, and so I gave my Cossack whip the swing of my arm, and sent it down on the blackguard's shoulder. He was taken completely by surprise, and for the first time stood quietly and assumed an attitude of respect. "How dare you talk to a general like that, eh? Go and tell your new governor that the General does not recognize him, and that he will come himself and appoint a governor of his own. And now be off!"

"How very severe of you," said Strukoff and the officers.

"It does not pay to speak in any other language to such cutthroats," I replied.

The next morning when I woke up I found Strukoff sitting on my bed. He had apparently been up some time. "I have decided," he said, "to advance on the town." "Bravo!" The emissaries had not yet departed, and so the General ordered them ahead with the news of our advance, and taking them aside, he demanded the villain! that they should bring him in token of submission the keys of the town, which he would have to forward to the commander-in-chief. "But there are no keys!" they exclaimed in dismay. "Then let keys be found. Not another word!" was the General's stern decision. They started off, but the insolent Greek remained, he was afraid of being waylaid and killed if he travelled by day, and so determined to wait until our departure —apparently his courage was an abstract quantity.

* * *

The day we arrived before Adrianople was fine and sunny. We were met by several people on horseback, among whom were two Armenians, the brothers Abdulla, a well-known firm of photographers to the Sultan at Adrianople and Constantinople. In front of the town itself, a dense crowd was moving about, whose animation increased as we drew nearer. At last they could restrain themselves no longer and ran towards us to meet us. Their enthusiasm knew no bounds and cannot be described. With shouts and groans they threw themselves on their knees before us, kissed the ground, and, crossing themselves, they kissed not only our hands, but our knees, boots and stirrups, as though we were holy images. It was impossible to prevent them, and we had to submit to it. The figure of Y. was exceedingly comical, with his beaming countenance, and his hands outstretched to be kissed, like a Madonna's, and literally covered with the tears of the enchanted crowd. Strukoff was nearly torn to pieces; if it had not been for the height of his English horse he would probably have suffered much.

* * *

We were informed that the clergy were coming to meet us with crosses and banners, and we were just preparing to enter the streets of Adrianople when I stopped Strukoff, and said: "It is simply foolhardy for us to enter the town." "Why so?" "Look at those narrow streets. Every shout of a coward, every chance shot would produce a panic. We are perhaps not quite so badly off, but our guns would be entirely useless, they could not even be turned around!"

"But then what shall we do?"

"Do not let us enter the town. Let us keep outside somewhere."

"Impossible; the clergy have turned out to meet us."

"Let them come, in God's name; they can always go back again."

Strukoff hesitated. "But where shall we halt?" he asked. I looked round. "On that hill to the left; let us wheel round and go there." Strukoff was still in doubt, but felt that there was no choice of plans, and so, "one, two, three," and we turned off sharply to the left and rode up a steep hill, followed by our men and the crowd. When we arrived at the summit our breath was taken with astonish-

ment. We could not have selected a better spot. The position was an ideal one. The top of the hill was a flat plain, and commanded the whole town which was spread out before us as though we held it in the palm of our hands. Our position here was not only practically impregnable, but we could threaten the town with our battery.

We had scarcely gotten to the top and looked round when we saw a great procession of the representatives of various churches and religions approaching us from the Bulgarian quarter of the town. The Greek Metropolitan (Dionysius) was at the head, and was followed by the Armenian Archbishop, the Bulgarian priest, the Jewish rabbis, and the Turkish mollahs, followed by a tremendous rabble. The entire plain was covered with people ; I think there must have been about thirty or forty thousand. This mass surrounded and hemmed us in to such an extent that while we were dismounting I was separated from Strukoff. Soon I heard him shouting, "Vassili Vassilievitch, come here quickly." He stretched out his hand, and by the kindly aid of the crowd I pushed my way to his side. We embraced the crosses, and kissed the plump, soft hand of the Metropolitan, who was evidently highly pleased at such a token of respect.

And now the *new governor*, referred to before, jumped up on a sort of bench to address us. He was a fat Greek, with the star of the Mejidich on his breast. In high-flown French he made us a speech of welcome, and did not forget to mention that he had been appointed to maintain order, and to finish his speech with "*Vive la Russie!*" and a cheer which was taken up by the multitude. He then handed Strukoff the keys of the town on a salver (three in number and very large in size). I afterwards inquired where these keys had been obtained, and was informed that they had been bought at the bazaar. Attached to a ring, two bunches of small keys had been added to these three enormous one. It may be as well here to record the ultimate fate of these keys. The biggest of all I took to crack nuts with, which were very common and very cheap and exceedingly good eating. The other two were sent off to the commander-in-chief, who dispatched them to St. Petersburg, where they are probably hanging in the cathedral. Before their dispatch Strukoff begged me to give him the third and most imposing of them, but I stuck

to it, and I have it now in my studio, where it hangs beside Skobeleff's flag.

* * *

But to return to Adrianople. I advised Strukoff to inform the self-elected governor that he did not recognize his authority, and that he would take the government of the town into his own hands until the arrival of his commanding officer. This Strukoff did, and much disconcerted the Greek, who, however, promptly recovered his presence of mind, thanked the General and again cheered the Russians. I then spoke my mind to the General and he repeated my words at the top of his voice, to the people, telling them how we intended to provide for our men whilst maintaining the inviolability of the houses of the inhabitants. "Let," said the General, "every nationality elect two representatives, and let a council of these representatives, presided over by the Greek Metropolitan, be intrusted with the duty of providing our men and horses with food and forage. On that condition, and that condition alone, will we refrain from making requisitions and keep our men outside the town. But if we are not supplied with all that is necessary, they will themselves go and get what they want. All that you bring us will be paid for at headquarters." All were evidently delighted at this decision, and were relieved of their fear of having to quarter our soldiers, a fear perfectly justifiable. The Greek, Fass, and the whole crowd with him, again cheered us and the Tzar Alexander, and this time they must have been perfectly sincere, for they shouted so loudly that the noise was deafening.

When the clergy had departed, we started for the church of the Bulgarian quarter, which was of course crammed full of people. The service began with the most frightful Greek singing, in complete contrast to the usually harmonious choral services of our own churches. I had heard this before, but had never experienced anything more depressing than this whining, and, although it was exceedingly stupid, I was convulsed with a spasm of laughter which I had very great difficulty in concealing. It happened that Strukoff stood beside me, and his laconic, "What a singing—Eh!" nearly set me off. He probably lost his patience, for when the priests had finished the short service and were preparing to celebrate mass, he sent Khristo to tell them that he had no

time to wait and to bid them finish quickly. The prospect was by no means pleasant; they were only about to begin.

Having embraced the cross we left the church, mounted our horses, and rode back to the hill. Here Strukoff drew his men up in a square, inspected them, thanked them for their services and congratulated them on investing the second capital of Turkey, the famous town of Adrianople.

* * *

The men bivouacked, and we occupied a corner house on the plain. We soon received news to the effect that Circassians were plundering the opposite extremity of the town. Strukoff gave me half a squadron of dragoons and told me to ride through the streets with them and to calm the populace and find out at the same time how much truth there was in the rumor. I pounced upon an old Bulgarian or Greek, I forget which, who spoke excellent Turkish and fairly good Russian, and made him proclaim in a loud voice as we rode along, that the people need fear nothing, as we were strong enough to defend them. The noise of our horses' hoofs on the paved streets nearly caused a panic at first, but on becoming convinced that we were their deliverers, the women in the houses stretched out their arms weeping, and those who were in the streets nearly threw themselves under our horses' feet crying: "We are being robbed! we are being robbed!" "Where and by whom are you robbed?" "Over there, by the Circassians!" I could not believe that such a panic could be without foundation, and rode all over the town, even to the very spot where the reported marauding was supposed to be taking place, but could find no trace of anything of the sort. Everywhere I found perfect peace and tranquillity, and everywhere I was assured that the Circassians were further on, plundering. What a strange thing is a panic!

The regimental commanders were very much displeased that the provision of food and forage had been intrusted to the natives. As I was the cause of this arrangement, their wrath fell principally upon me. Besides which I amazed them still more by bringing before Strukoff a few dragons whom I had caught marauding in the Bulgarian houses of the neighborhood. The General had them flogged as an example to the others in front of their regiment, and the punish-

ment was severe. I thought even the amiable Y., was angry with me, and that when I left Strukoff's room, he went in and frightened him with the prospect of our not getting any food for horses and men. I saw that Strukoff worried and regretted having allowed me to take such humane measures. As evening approached we kept sending messengers into the town to tell them to hurry up. We invariably received the same answer: "All will be sent." But nothing came. It was clear that nothing but the dread of offending the general prevented the officers from swearing at me to my face; but what was worse I felt myself really guilty. At last, when it was dusk, enormous hampers arrived full of everything, absolutely everything that the heart could wish. There was bread, soup, meat, wine; even the tobacco was not forgotten—there was a large hamper full of delicious Turkish tobacco. Every one brightened up. Only one thing was wanted. There was not enough hay for the horses; they had to be fed on oats and barley.

This system of making the population supply the provisions many did not consider practical. Nevertheless I still firmly believe it was the one best suited to the circumstances. If the general had let his men go off into the houses to get the various articles of food required, there can be no doubt that this wealthy town would have been picked as dry as a bone. It was indeed fortunate that the cool-headed Strukoff did not allow himself to be dissuaded from his original arrangement. The consequence was that no robberies were committed, and that we maintained the best relations with the townsfolk. When the main body of the army came up, all this was changed, disorders commenced, and one or two of our men were even murdered by the people.

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On the morning of the next day the Austrian consul called on us in full uniform, attended by our old friend the Greek, Fass. This last gentleman was taken into another room and asked to wait, as we had no intention of having official relations with him of any kind; but the Austrian consul was at once received by Strukoff. He plunged immediately into the business that had brought him, and told us in French that we had deposed the only authority there was at Adrianople, and that by so doing we had imperilled

public order, for a riot was fomenting. Strukoff was at first rather confused at this accusation, and seemed to think that if a revolt was really brewing the situation was decidedly awkward. He was apparently hesitating, and began to say that as far as he was concerned he had nothing against the Greek. But here I interposed: "Your Excellency," I said, "will you allow me to answer the consul in your name?" Strukoff assented, and so I turned to the consul and said: "The general is much obliged to you, Mr. Consul-General, for your advice, which he accepts as the advice of a sincere friend. As Mr. Fass has already been told, the general will himself watch over the town until the arrival of General Skobeleff, on whom all further arrangements will depend. As to the revolt which you dread, General Strukoff assures you that the whole thing is an invention. He will undertake to maintain order, and will cut down any one who proves unmanageable. Once more allow me to thank you for your kindness in warning us." According to the custom of diplomatists to put a good face on a bad game, the consul appeared to be much pleased with the result of his visit, and having come for wool went back shorn. Strukoff and Y. thanked me warmly for getting rid of him. "Frankly," said Strukoff, "his prophecy of a revolt rather frightened me."

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Strukoff sent me to inspect the storehouses of the town. Everywhere I found pillaging going on. All who could were carrying off whatever they could lay their hands on, in armfuls and in carts. I cleared out the thieves and locked the doors, notwithstanding the assurances of the Turks that they were *guarding* the places. I placed sentries over these stores, but cannot guarantee that they kept their hands clean when my back was turned.

The storehouses, however, were so large and numerous that it was impossible to inspect them all, still less to go over every one carefully in so short a time. We afterward discovered that in one of these storehouses there was a splendid collection of bamboos for javelin shafts, which the commander-in-chief presented to the regiment of Uhlans of the Guard. Strukoff, who was himself an Uhlan, regretted that he did not make the present, and reproached me in a friendly manner for having overlooked these javelins.

Beside the storehouses I inspected a large number of mosques, among which one, the chief mosque, was most beautiful and magnificent.

I had only just returned from this inspection when a fire broke out in our camp. The Cossacks, who had plenty of dry wood, had lighted an enormous fire in their kitchen, and it was consequently not surprising that the house was in flames. Fortunately only one house was burned ; the others were some distance off and escaped.

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Strukoff discovered that the *protégé* of the Austrian consul, the Greek Fass, who had set his heart on being made governor, was plotting against us and trying to create disturbances and riots. The general wanted to arrest him, but on reflection thought it better to let him off with a reprimand. So I rode out early in the morning, accompanied by a few dragoons, and surrounded the Greek's house. I entered and saw frightened faces behind every door and crevice. The master came out pale and trembling and looking like a corpse. He evidently expected, judging from Turkish precedent, that his last hour had come. I had to call up all the diplomacy I was possessed of, and ask after his health, the number of his children, etc. I then turned the conversation on the absolute necessity of his holding himself aloof from all intrigues, which might bring him into serious trouble, and in conclusion told him that the general had commissioned me to make this communication, and to convey to him the general's hope that there would be no necessity to resort to extreme measures. Fass was nearly beside himself with joy, and gaving a sort of jump, assured me of his devotion, his wish to be useful, etc., etc.

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Two Albanians were brought before Strukoff, most desperate robbers by the accounts of the Bulgarians, who had cut children out of their mothers' wombs and committed other atrocities. The general ordered them to be bound together firmly, and so the dragoons put the fellows back to back and pulled out and tied up their elbows so tightly that they became quite black in the face. Thrown on the ground, they glared like a couple of tigers at the Bulgarian crowd which

surged around them, mainly composed of women and children who abused them, spat into their eyes and threw lumps of earth and dirt at them. The dragoon who was placed on guard over them did not, of course, interfere, but permitted them to be kicked and cuffed to the heart's content of the mob.

I asked Strukoff to have them hung, but he would not allow it. He told me he did not like fusillading and hanging in time of war, and would not have these two fellows on his conscience, but would hand them over to Skobeleff, who could do with them as he liked.

"That is all right," I answered. "I will ask him; there will be no delays with him!"

"What makes you so bloodthirsty? I did not know that was a trait in your character."

I was obliged to confess that I had never seen a man hung, and was much interested in the process.

When I went to look at the two Albanians the next day I felt sorry for them; it would have been more merciful to have hung them. They were lying on the ground swollen out and quite blue from being bound up, and were shouting, "Aman! Aman!" Their turbans and fezzes had been knocked off their heads, and their faces were battered and bloodstained by the stones and chumps that the throng kept continually throwing at them. The sentry marched dispassionately up and down without spoiling the sport.

Skobeleff arrived in the evening. We went to meet him at the railway station, and he was subsequently escorted to our headquarters by a cavalry guard of honor. On the way the entire population turned out to meet the gallant general, and a scene ensued similar to that which took place on our own arrival, only it was perhaps not quite so enthusiastic, for such scenes do not repeat themselves as a rule. The windows were studded with Greek women, who kept peeping out as we passed, and some of whom were remarkably beautiful. I rode behind Skobeleff, and kept giving him the word of command. "Eyes right! Eyes left! Hold your head higher!" An ardent admirer of female beauty, Skobeleff kept his eyes fixed on the pretty faces, and it seemed to me that the women on their part looked after him with special interest.

Suddenly our old friend Fass turned up again. He was

riding behind the general to show the people that he was in our good graces. He was at once requested to take himself off; but instead he rode on to the front, shouting right and left, "Bow to the general, welcome the general!" He was ordered to clear off altogether, and then at last he disappeared.

I asked Skobeleff to hang the two robbers referred to above, and he answered, "Very well." He called the colonel of a battalion of rifles and bade him hold a court-martial over the fellows, adding, "And please be so good as to have them hung." "All right, your excellency!" was the reply, and I considered the business settled, thinking I should yet see an execution before leaving Adrianople, and be able to put it on canvas. But it was not to be. Shortly before our departure I found my two friends still in same unenviable position, and inquired whether they were not going to be hung, but received in reply the monosyllable "No." Having heard that a court-martial had been called, Strukoff had begged Skobeleff not to kill the malefactors, for his sake, and it is very probable that even now these two knights of industry are hale and hearty, full of gratitude for the clemency of the Russian generals and still disembowelling Christians. I have painted them bound up.

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Toward night, on the third day of our sojourn at Adrianople, we marched out on the road to Constantinople. It was so dark that our division was broken up, and we lost track of the cavalry in the van. This would have been an excellent opportunity for the enemy, either to cut us to pieces or to take us prisoners, and it is probable that the Circassians who were hovering about would have done so, had they not degenerated from mountain panthers to jackals, good for nothing but plundering. We called a halt in the middle of the road near some small hovels.

Our next halting place was at Havsa, which we reached on the following day. Here we found a prison and the most complete apparatus for torturing and chaining up criminals. I made a small collection of these Turkish toys, comprising irons for the neck, hands and feet, of very respectable weight, and a still heavier chain with which convicts, chiefly Bulgarians, were fastened when they were sent to Adrianople in irons.

Here a few Bulgarians came up to us from a neighboring farm, and told us that some Turks had passed the previous night at their house, and had held a perfect orgy and outraged the women. Strukoff gave me Khristo and sent me with a small body of Uhlans to punish the miscreants if possible. When we arrived at the farm, which was about three miles off, at full gallop, we were shown the retreating figures of three Turks who were running to the mountains as fast as their feet could carry them. Khristo, seized with martial ardor, asked permission to pursue them with the aid of an Uhlan, but this was absurd, as they had already the advantage of over a mile, and could easily either get away or hide themselves from their pursuers ; so I preferred returning without carrying off the victory. But Khristo could not sheathe his sword without giving an outlet to his valor, and so he cut off the head of a goose that belonged to the farm. This decapitated savior of Rome, along with the other members of his flock, and some pickled cabbage and curds and whey, we carried off with us. They reminded us a little that day at dinner of our distant native land. The women who had been molested by the Turks were pointed out to me. "You have been ill-treated?" I asked. "Yes," they replied, blushing, and hid their heads in their aprons. It was clear that further particulars were not to be gained from them.

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On the road from Havsa the people had deserted their homes and sought refufie in the forests and underwood in the neighborhood. At first we mistook them in the distance for the Turkish marauders, and they themselves did not apparently feel quite safe in leaving their encampments to meet us, not being quite certain that we were really the orthodox Christian Russian army of the advance of which they had heard. But when they had once made up their minds on this point, they gave vent to their joy most unmistakably, and threw themselves on their knees before us, kissing the hems of our garments when they could get a chance, weeping and shouting, "Long live the Tsar Alexander!" They all complained of the treatment they had received at the hands of the Turkish army as well as from the Turkish population, who had emigrated to a man to Con-

stantinople. Before leaving they had robbed the Bulgarians of all they could carry with them, and had seized, with the aid of the Turkish authorities, not only the clothes and domestic furniture they could lay their hands on, but even the horses, cattle and carts. We were told that these emigrants had only just departed, and that they were still within marching distance, and they implored us to overtake them and wrest from them at least some of the stolen property.

As we approached Baba-Eski the evidences of robbery and violence grew more and more marked. We could hear sobs and lamentations, and it was clear that the pillaging had taken place quite recently. On entering the place our eyes were greeted by the sight of the Bulgarian priest, a man of advanced years, lying under a fence with his throat cut. The neighbors told us that the miscreants had insisted on the old man confessing where he had hidden his money, and when he had sworn that he had no money they had killed him. Here and there the sound of women's voices reached us from the houses. The Turks had left only the night before, and were believed to be still close by.

Here, as at Havsa, we made a halt. Strukoff advanced steadily, stopping nowhere and resting only every third day. We used to march out very early, while it was still dark, halt to rest and have dinner, and then march on until nightfall, when we slept. The following day we did the same, and on the third we rested for twenty-four hours. The general paid special attention to the horses, which were fresh and strong and in good condition; as for the men, that goes without saying; they were all as jolly as sand-boys.

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Before reaching Loulli-Burgas we began to overtake the hindermost wagons of the Turkish fugitives. Fearing they might be searched and accused of theft, they tore off the Bulgarian embroidery and fancy work from the goods they had stolen and threw them away; they also threw away their swords and muskets, having previously broken them. Strukoff ordered them to halt, for which purpose we had to send men far in advance, as the line of wagons extended to an enormous length. Some of them stood in front of the bridge that led into the town, others were drawn up on the road, others again on another road, and another lot had crossed

the bridge and were on their way on the other side of the river; these of course we could not overtake, but had to allow them to escape. The number of wagons was enormous. I remember that Strukoff was accused in the papers of exaggerating the number of emigrants. In spite of his request, I declined to take part in a newspaper war; but I may here mention that the fact of the Turks proceeding by different roads refutes the attacks of the papers, and I may add that the statistics of the reports sent to the commander-in-chief, which I compiled myself, were, of course approximately, correct.

As these people did not themselves know why they were going to Constantinople, where nothing but ruin and starvation awaited them, I asked the general to allow those who felt so inclined to return whence they came, and he agreed to my proposal. Taking Khristo with me, I had all the elder of the emigrants called together, and informed them that at Rum,* where they were going, there was already a famine, and that they would simply be ruined if they went there. "Would it not be better, therefore," I said, "to return at once. The Russian general, so far from interfering with your movements, is your well wisher and advises you to adopt this course." They had many discussions on the subject. It was clear that some of them, who probably had less on their conscience than the rest, desired to return, but to others the idea was repugnant. They were given leisure to arrive at a decision, and were told to send in their reply at a stated time.

In the mean time I rode around this lively encampment of emigrants and ordered all arms to be piled up in a heap, adding that any concealment of weapons would be severely punished. Soon a perfect mountain of weapons of all descriptions was formed, and I again made a selection for myself of a few particularly good specimens, some of them were taken by officers, but the rest were carried away and put under guard.

A number of the Turks decided to return if we gave them a convoy to protect them from the vengeance of the Bulgarians. This was provided, and they soon started off escorted

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This is another name for Constantinople in use among Mussulmans and Asiatics generally.

by a few Uhlans. The Bulgarians feeling their power, hovered about like jackals, and some even had the impudence to carry things off from the Turkish wagons under our very eyes, assuring us that they had been stolen from them. I drove a good many away with my Cossack whip ; but as a matter of fact, it was very difficult to decide who were the robbers, and who the robbed.

Riding among the crowds of Turks and their wagons I noticed that many of the women were very good looking and some beautiful. Strukoff spoke to a few of these who had come to him with petitions, and one, a very pretty young woman, talked very boldly, and insisted strongly on the fact that as her husband was dead she was free and could now do as she liked ; but the good-humored general smiled and said, " What a frisky matron ! "

The majority of the Turks, however, decided to go on, and in this they were not hindered. When the wagons began to move, I rode on to the front to see how order was being maintained, and was horrified to hear the shrieks of women. I galloped in the direction of the cries to see what was the matter, when I discovered that some Cossacks had stopped a wagon ; two of them had jumped in and one was holding a woman while another was searching her. The moment they saw me they released their victim and disappeared with the rapidity of lightning. Nevertheless they was found, and on the next day before the entire force, which was drawn up in a square, these two fellows were severely flogged with rods as an example for all who had eyes to see to profit by. Strukoff thanked me, but the regimental commanders, especially the colonel of Cossacks, was much disgusted.

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In the evening of the day of the departure of the Turkish emigrants I wrote, at Strukoff's request, a report to the commander-in-chief in which I pointed out the importance of representing to the authorities at Constantinople the frightful privations their subjects had to suffer owing to this enforced emigration, which was more ruinous to the country and the population than the war itself, and was only occasioned by the fanaticism and foolishness of Suleyman Pasha.

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On our march we had a false alarm. Strukoff, myself, and a few others, by way of avoiding the dust caused by the Turkish carts, were riding on a separate road which followed the river, on the opposite bank of which was a long procession of wagons and a crowd of ragamuffins. Suddenly a number of these got into boats and began rowing over to where we were. To tell the truth, all of us, Strukoff not excepted, felt rather nervous at this circumstance, for we were completely separated from our main body and were practically unarmed beyond a revolver and a Cossack carbine or two. Of course the thought of being killed or wounded did not frighten us so much as the idea that we might be taken prisoners, like half a dozen sheep, without being able to offer any material resistance. As it turned out, these people had peaceful intentions. They were Bulgarians, who came over to give us information of the movements of the enemy, and to complain of the treatment they had received, etc. We laughed very heartily at our mistake.

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We were now approaching the town of Tchorlou, where, from information received from the natives, we expected to find Turkish troops. A young officer, Prince D., was sent out with half a squadron of dragoons to scout. But as he did not send messengers for some time, and we were told that the Turks had infantry and guns, the general became very uneasy about him. At our last halting-place before reaching the town, Strukoff not having heard from D., asked me whether I thought it would be advisable to march straight on the town without waiting for news. I proposed that he should send me on in front with a hundred Cossacks to draw the enemy's fire and send him a plan of their position. Strukoff at once agreed to my proposal and ordered a captain of Cossacks to escort and protect me with his troop. As it turned out this saved the dragoons; nor need they have suffered any loss at all had it not been for the extreme cunning and obstinacy of the Cossacks. Having been told to protect me from the Turks, that is to say, to expose themselves and their horses to danger, they were very slow in carrying out their orders. I rode off at a trot, but they followed me at a walk, I increased my pace and sent one of the two orderly Cossacks I had with me to ask them to keep up with me, but they replied that their

horses were very tired, and by way of demonstrating the fact, they proceeded to dismount, and led their horses by the bridle, as much as to say, "there is no need to hurry."

On arriving close to Tchorlou I heard shots, the interchange increasing in rapidity. Apparently a warm fight was going on. I now sent my last Cossack off to the captain of the troop to ask him to bring his men up at double quick, and told him that if he disobeyed the responsibility would be on his shoulders. I myself remained waiting. Before me lay the river flowing in a deep valley and beyond it I could see the town. The sound of shouting and shooting from thence came nearer and nearer, at last I could see emerging from the hills first one horseman then a second and a third—these were our dragoons coming along at full speed pursued by Turks. The blood rushed to my head. I rode to meet them and shouted: "Stop, stop you ——," and lifted my Cossack whip to strike one of them, but on seeing his face I restrained myself. "I am wounded," he muttered through perfectly green lips, and galloped on not having strength to stop his horse. At this moment the Cossacks came up, and the Turks, seeing reinforcements were arriving, stopped the pursuit.

The dragoons had been completely demoralized. They had gotten as far as the higher bank of the river, but as this was the first time they had been under fire, they were apparently quite unable to conquer their surprise. I said to D., "Are you not ashamed of yourself for running away like that?" But he replied: "What could I do? The men were all young and untried, and did not obey orders." But a little later he lost his temper, and turning round to me said: "And what business is it of yours?" "I am ashamed of you, that is all!" I answered. However, it was very difficult for him to do anything with his untried men after having been surprised by the Turks. All he could do was to follow their example, and, accompanied by the other officers, to hold off the Turks with revolvers.

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The affair was brought about in this way. D. got safely to Tchorlou, but neglected to pay attention to the fact that the Bulgarians did not come out to meet him, which, alone, was a sure sign of the presence of the enemy. On reaching

the river and the valley along which the permanent track of the railway is laid, and where there is a station, he inquired whether there were Turks in the town. The assistant station-master replied: "No, they have all gone." So D. ordered his men to dismount and commenced inspecting the station.

In the mean time the Turks, of whom there were about two thousand, had really left the town, and their main body was already far away, but the rear guard which consisted of cavalry of the Sultan's Life-Guards, and who were splendidly equipped and armed with the Peabody rifle, had only just marched out. Hearing that a small number of "Muscovites" had arrived, and that they had most comfortably established themselves at the railway station, about two or three hundred turned back and attacked our fellows. The dragoons had scarcely time to mount and get to the bridge when the Turks were pouring lead into them. Our men replied with the same, but as they had no more than twenty cartridges apiece they exhausted their ammunition in a few minutes, and then, seeing that the Turks were fording the river to cut off their retreat, they galloped off as hard as they could, the Turks following them, cutting down about fifteen men; and if the troop of Cossacks had not arrived all would have been exterminated.

We were standing on the very ridge of the hill which flanked the valley. Before us an extremely picturesque view presented itself, bounded by the town which was on an opposite elevation. Below was the railway, with its station and the bridge, across which the enemy were languidly retiring, looking round with apparent regret at being balked of their prey. Arrived on the opposite bank of the river they joined their main body, and seemed to expect us to come and attack them. Knowing that Strukoff, to whom I had dispatched the same Cossack who had sent on the troop, would order up reinforcements, I proposed to the Cossack captain that we should slowly descend the hill, and shouted to D. to join us in case we wanted him. But D. cried to me, "Do not go! there are too many of them;" and the Cossack captain declared that he could not undertake to lead his men, who were in such small numbers. "Of course if you order me!" "I have no right to order you, but if you refuse the responsibility, I will order you. Forward, easy, close up!" We

leisurely advanced, the dragoons bringing up in the rear, and the Turks retired before us slowly. They were about five hundred yards off, so that we could clearly distinguish every individual soldier. They were all in magnificent uniforms, with crescents on their caps, picked men evidently, and mounted on excellent hardy little horses.

In my report to Strukoff I asked him not only to send us reinforcements, but to send two other detachments by a detour, which he did, and so, as soon as we had crossed the bridge, we were joined by a squadron of Uhlans coming up at full trot under the command of the adjutant of the regiment, a charming officer, who was met by a number of Greeks and Bulgarians, and was, with myself enthusiastically welcomed as the deliverer of the town (at which we laughed heartily), and, of course, our hands and feet had to be kissed.

Just then the air was rent by fearful shrieks. We discovered that D. was chastising the station master for having misinformed him, and as the punishment was executed by the dragoons who had suffered from his false news, it is more than probable that his howling was perfectly sincere.

We received orders from the general not to enter the town, but to await his arrival. Strukoff soon joined us, and brought with him Captain Prince Vassiltchikoff, who had been dispatched with the news that the truce had been signed. Our troops were drawn up, and the Bulgarian priests offered thanksgivings, after which Prince Vassiltchikoff conveyed to the men the gratitude of His Imperial Highness, the commander-in-chief, for their services, and informed them that a truce had been concluded, and that this would probably be shortly followed by peace. He and Strukoff, who had also thanked us for our short engagement, were greeted with loud cheers.

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We found quarters, and our company was now increased by the addition of Prince Vassiltchikoff, a very simple-minded, broad-shouldered and agreeable fellow. Our meat and vegetables were good, and the cream and butter excellent, while the almonds and raisins were so cheap and so good that my Adrianopolitan trophy, the enormous key which had probably once turned the lock of some warehouse, was in constant requisition for the nuts. My Cossack, Kurbatoff, a roguish fellow but not of a bad sort, who had

formerly served as cook, was no longer allowed to make our soups, although he assured us that he could do it as well as anybody. To him was intrusted the important duty of preparing the coffee, of which a large quantity was consumed, and which was consequently made in a colossal copper kettle. Whether the coffee was really superior, or whether the violent exercise we had taken had made us particularly appreciative, it is difficult to say, but we all praised it highly, and put Kurbatoff in such conceit of himself that he would never afterward allow anyone to prepare coffee for us, and often was on the point of fighting for the honor.

It is curious that my Cossack owed his St. George's Cross for valor to this coffee. "Why don't you recommend your Cossack for the St. George's Cross?" asked Strukoff. "Why should he be decorated? He has never once been under fire with me," I replied. "What does that matter? That is clearly not his fault! I am certain that if the occasion presented itself he would not desert you." "That is true enough," I said; "if you like, recommend him." And so Kurbatoff decorated his manly bosom with the "order of military distinction and valor."

Here it is as well to note that soldiers' crosses were bestowed with a remarkable light-heartedness. Among the combatants some kind of justice obtains, inasmuch as a certain number of crosses are awarded to the men of each company after an engagement, and they are allowed to elect the actual recipients. Of course, under this system, the non-commissioned officers always get the lion's share, still the men have some chance, and glaring partiality is avoided. But the good-for-nothings, such as young cadets and cashiered officers, invariably get decorated with one or two, or even three or four (the fourth is in gold with a ribbon) St. George's crosses, even if they only happened to have been present at an engagement. The staff officers' servants, and the servants at headquarters, all people with more or less influence, always receive the cross, even if they have never so much as heard the whistle of a bullet, and have limited their heroic achievements to carrying their master's luggage from one baggage wagon to another. S. had a Cossack, Parshin by name, who received two crosses, and showed his gratitude by taking with him to the Don, as a souvenir, two of his master's rifles.

Our Khristo, who already possessed one St. George's Cross, but who was animated by an indomitable desire to hang several on his breast, at last begged me to say a good word for him to Strukoff, and of course enumerated to me all his arguments, services, and claims. Alas! I must confess that I fell and promised to help, and did indeed ask Strukoff. At the time of the coronation of the Emperor in Moscow I subsequently saw Khristo, walking with the solemnity of a trained poodle behind the Prince of Bulgaria, with three crosses of St. George in his button-hole. I console myself with the reflection that I was not the only sinner, and that he used all his influence at headquarters to back his petition; and no doubt the gallant Khristo repeated to all his other benefactors the story of his bravery.

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I suppose the Cossacks were delighted at the truce, for they lighted a tremendous fire. I had occasion to pass the building in which they were quartered and could not help saying to myself: "What if there should be a conflagration." I was not far wrong; the entire house was soon in flames and I had the greatest difficulty in getting my own horses away. Fortunately no one was burnt, although this occurred at night, and nobody lost anything in the flames, but the large building was entirely destroyed. This was the second house that suffered by sheltering us and our heroes, the officers' servants. It was late at night when we turned out and, standing on the opposite side of the square, directed the extinction of the flames and the isolation of the house. We afterward removed to the house of a Greek, where we were very well accommodated.

Here we were perpetually besieged by the inhabitants with complaints of the treatment they had received, not alone from the Turks, but from our men as well, who persisted in seeking their fortune in other people's houses. Once Strukoff and I went together to catch the marauders at night, for he had lost all patience and wanted to see for himself whether these complaints were well grounded or not. More frequently I went alone with a Cossack, but it was like trying to catch a Jack-o'-lantern. These seekers after hidden treasure were remarkably active fellows, and used to jump over palings and get onto roofs with the most praiseworthy

agility. It was at least gratifying to rout them out and frighten them.

Strukoff had a frightful amount of work to do. In the daytime I assisted him as much as I could, and so did the officer of dragoons of whom mention has been made, and who copied documents, but at night I slept conscientiously, and only saw occasionally, with one eye as it were, how Strukoff received dispatches from the numerous small detachments that had been sent out in different directions. Here a railway station had been seized with an attack of government correspondence. There a band of marauding Circassians had been caught, or a Turkish flag, hidden in a wagon, detached from its flagstaff that it might be more easily stowed away, had been captured, etc., etc., etc. Like the police official in the French play "Les Charbonniers," who never gets to his breakfast, but is continually pestered with new arrivals, Strukoff could never get a wink of sleep. He had scarcely read one telegram, and answered it, blown out the candles and laid down, before there was a knock at his door and another one arrived.

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Skobeleff arrived on the third day by railway, at night. We went out to meet him, but as he was late we had nearly given him up, and were going to return home when he came. The general had shaved his head, which, truth to tell, did not suit him remarkably, especially as his cap, having become too big for him, had slipped down to his ears. Skobeleff was in perpetual fear of becoming bald like his father, and it was enough to tell him that he was losing his hair to make him have his head cropped like a convict's. In the present instance it is possible that the "White Pasha" was not above courting popularity with the Mussulmans by means of his shaven crown, but the expression of involuntary surprise of all Russians at the sight of it did not apparently put him in a good humor.

Soon after the arrival of the commander of the vanguard of the forces, we marched toward Tchataldja, where, according to the conditions of the truce, we were to stay. These were our last marches. The officers and men were delighted both at the truce and at the imminent prospect of peace, for which their wives and children in their distant homes had long been praying. However, the probable contingency of

an "occupation" alarmed some of them and tempered their joy.

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What beautiful ruins we met with here! On our left was a hill covered with the remains of buildings. I went to inspect them, and found myself surrounded by columns and capitols, bas-reliefs, etc., of beautiful work of the Greco-Byzantine period and of pure white marble. From the summit of the hill I beheld a sea on either side of me. A shepherd was sitting on this hill, which was stuffed like a pillow with the magnificent relics of former grandeur, and was tending a flock of sheep that grazed round about. It was clear that nobody took the slightest interest in these marbles. Unfortunately we were quite as unsympathetic. I suggested to Skalon afterward that it would be a good thing to collect some of the most interesting specimens of this ancient architecture and send them off to Russia, but he only said: "We can't be bothered with them. How are we to cart them away?" The whole of this country was covered with vestiges of antiquity, of the Byzantine period of Greek art, and nearly all the mosques have splendid specimens taken mostly from ruined churches. The bases of the columns in the mosques were invariably ancient capitals taken from churches and turned upside down; they were frequently of beautiful workmanship, and always worn on the side nearest the entrance, where the shoes of the faithful had been wiped against them.

At this place we met a telegraph official from Constantinople. He had been sent to inspect the wires, on the efficiency of which the quickness of the treaty negotiations largely depended. Strukoff let him pass, although he had no regular passport.

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Silivri is a charming little place on the very shores of the sea. Not a single Greek or Bulgarian came out to meet us, a sure sign that it was occupied by Turkish troops, and so it turned out to be. I rode a long way in front of the main body. In the streets were crowds of people and Turkish cavalry, the very same fellows with whom we had come to conclusions at Tchorlou. They all fixed their eyes upon me,

the people with evident sympathy, to which, however, they dared not give expression, and the soldiers fiercely and with hatred. I was taken to Ideat Pasha, who commanded these cavalry outposts.

Presenting myself as the secretary of the Russian general, I explained that the Turkish troops must immediately evacuate the town, and make room for us. He replied that he had not as yet received instructions, that he had sent off inquiries, and was awaiting a reply, and he added that he hoped we would allow him to remain until his instructions arrived. "Perhaps the general will allow it, but only for a very short time." Strukoff himself soon arrived, and I explained the situation to him. It was so clear that the Pasha was trying to cheat us, and wanted to make the *de facto* boundary between us Silivri instead of Tchataldja, that Strukoff insisted on his clearing out at once. "But is there not room for both of us? You could occupy one part of the town, and I the other." "That would not do," said Strukoff who was beginning to lose patience and repeated his demand. "But your secretary has already given us permission to await a reply." "No," said Strukoff; "he only spoke of giving you a short period of grace." "But we cannot possibly march out without receiving instructions." "Then *we* shall clear you out," was Strukoff's grim rejoinder. "Will your excellency order up the guns?" I asked. "Let us wait a little," said Strukoff; "perhaps he will go away of himself." Having ordered our men not to occupy the whole town, so as to avoid coming in contact with the Turks, the general waited a minute or two, during which time we drank a cup of coffee, but as we got no answer, and saw no signs of evacuation, the Turkish troops still standing about the streets and glaring at our own, we asked again whether they would clear out or not. "Until they received a reply from Constantinople they could not," was the answer. Strukoff went out into the hall, and, in a voice that would have done honor to a much bigger chest than his, shouted: "Bring up the guns!" Several men ran off, shouting: "The guns! the guns!" Ideat suddenly changed his demeanor and became extremely fussy. "We shall receive an answer at once," he said, "at once." "Not another word," said Strukoff. "We have received an answer. We will evacuate at once." The Turks actually got on their horses and left, and we took possession of their

headquarters, which they had left in a filthy state and full of vermin. In the evening Ideat turned up again, in the most cheerful frame of mind; evidently he was desirous of assuring us that we could well live side by side without quarrelling. He gave me a most friendly slap on the back with the familiarity of an old friend, to which I replied by a vigorous thump across his shoulders in an equally friendly spirit, knowing that in the East external ceremonies, especially between people, are more strictly adhered to and have more importance than anywhere else.

Strukoff turned a deaf ear to all further Turkish dodges. The pasha informed us that he had received orders from Constantinople to evacuate the town, but not to retire any further, also asserting that, owing to new conditions made with our headquarters staff, we were not to go beyond Silivri. "I know the arrangements of my headquarters staff better than you do, and if I shall go on and if you do not retire before me, I shall attack you," was Strukoff's blunt answer. "Very well, attack us; but the responsibility for such an act of injustice will lie upon your own shoulders." "That will be decided afterward; take care it does not fall on yours." "But how is that possible when we have just received the most imperative orders. May I show you the telegram." "There is no occasion. I have my instructions in my pocket, and I shall carry them out." We had some difficulty in getting rid of this obstinate pasha, who kept assuring us of the devotion henceforth of Turks to Russians, of his personal friendship for us, and of the injustice of attacking him the following day, etc., etc.

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Thus I have always pictured to myself the treaty negotiations in the old days between Poland and Russia. The one proposing the cession of Smolensk, the other demanding everything up to Warsaw, and finally, after much sweating and disputing, screaming and shouting, the strongest and most obstinate of the two had its way, and the boundary line was drawn to its satisfaction.

* * *

Marching out the next morning we found the Turks had started at the same time we did, and moved so slowly that

we had to halt continually to keep ourselves from running into their horses' tails. Strukoff, after remonstrating in vain, rode round the Turks, whose rear guard was far behind us, and when even that had no effect he grew angry and ordered our guns to be placed in position. The Turks moved a little more quickly, but Strukoff was not satisfied with this, and riding up on the rising ground which bordered the highway, shouted out with the same tremendous voice which he apparently reserved for exceptional cases : " Double-quick ! march ! " The Turkish cavalry, the majority of whom were Arabs, probably did not understand the command, but some of them must have known what it meant, for they galloped off, followed by the rest, and rode before the Russian general as though marching past at a review. It was amusing to see these Arabs with their bournouses flying in the wind, with silken tassels to their shawls, and carrying their long lances. In some cases the saddles, not prepared for a gallop, slipped round and the men were shot over their horses' heads. But with the agility of cats they overtook their steeds and remounted them while at full gallop ; and all this amid the roars of laughter of our fellows, who were literally holding their sides.

When we reached our halting place we again stumbled across these Turks. A colonel from the Turkish head-quarters staff was with them. He had been dispatched by Mukhtar Pasha, who commanded the remnants of the Turkish army. This colonel had very probably been enlisting the sympathies of the Austrian and American military representatives, and most likely complained of us and begged for their intervention, for on entering the house where Strukoff received him, this officer (who had been educated in England) asked rather curtly whether there was any one in the place who spoke English, as he did not know French. " I shall be pleased to translate for you," said Green, the American. " Very well," replied the delighted Turk, who now commenced a long tirade, but Strukoff cut him short. " If you please," he said, " I do not understand English. Kindly tell Mukhtar Pasha to send us an officer who can speak either French or German, or else address yourself to General Skobeleff." Arguments were not listened to, and the Turk was obliged to retire.

Skobeleff determined to dispatch an officer to Ghazi (the

invincible) Mukhtar, and we continued in the mean time to push on to Tchataldja. There we comprehended why the Turks had tried so hard to keep us back. The forts which composed the celebrated Tchekmendji lines for the defence of Constantinople from the land, were not yet completed and men were still busily engaged on them. In some places even the earthworks were not completed; and though in others the forts themselves were ready, their guns had not yet been mounted. It was clear that the Turks had relied upon their early victories in Europe and Asia, and had turned their attention too late to the protection of their capital, or rather capitals, for both Adrianople and Constantinople proved to be undefended at the last moment.

* * *

I rode with a few dragoons to inspect the lines which were situated a few miles from Tchataldja, and came to the conclusion that for horses they would be very difficult to pass at that time of the year, and for artillery practically impossible. The road was simply a quagmire, wherein it seemed to be only natural to get stuck and die an impenitent sinner.

The officer whom Skobeleff had sent to Mukhtar Pasha returned, having accomplished his mission. But I was horrified when I heard how he was treated. By way of a joke, Mukhtar, while talking to him, pulled his beard, one side of which had a slightly different color from the other. The elegant and refined Russian officer did not, however, resent this insult—did not knock down the invincible Mukhtar, nor even betray his feelings. My fingers itched when I heard it; for no greater insult can be paid an enemy according to Mussulman custom, than to pull his beard. I can imagine how Mukhtar and his cronies must have laughed over this little incident when they related it.

Skobeleff was somewhat sombre and out of sorts when he arrived. When we were alone he said:

"Vassili Vassilievitch, do you think the war is over?"

"I believe it is," I answered.

"You think peace will be made?"

"I do; and I mean to be off on the strength of it."

"Wait a bit. Perhaps peace will not be made quite so soon. We may yet march on Constantinople."

"No; I am sure peace will be made. I am going off to paint pictures."

"Lucky fellow!"

* * *

Skobeleff told Strukoff and me at luncheon that when the division of cavalry of the guard under General E. —— marched on Rodosto, the inhabitants kept him waiting outside of the town on some pretext or other. When he was at length admitted, he discovered that a vessel laden with the town treasure, which represented a very considerable sum, had just left the harbor for Constantinople. To do myself justice, I had frequently asked Strukoff to send me with a small detachment to the wealthy town of Rodosto, to levy a small ransom of a million roubles or so and then come back. Strukoff liked the idea, but, being a very careful man, he did not wish to risk sending too small a detachment, lest it should be cut to pieces, and on the other hand did not want to weaken his own forces to too great an extent by sending a large one. Later, when we were officially informed of the truce, all schemes of that kind had to be given up. Now that I heard that there really had been large sums of money in the treasury of Rodosto, I nearly jumped off my chair.

"Did not I ask you, General Strukoff, to let me levy a subsidy from Rodosto?"

Skobeleff laughed and said:

"What a soldier you are, Vassili Vassilievitch!"

At Adrianople the commander-in-chief received me very graciously. "I thank you," he said; "you are a good all-round man, and do everything well." "Glad to serve you," was my dutiful reply. I explained to His Imperial Highness our reasons for permitting some of the Turkish fugitives to return to their homes; there can be no doubt that they would not have found rest for the soles of their feet, and would have returned starving and ruined. It was clearly better to let them go back with their goods and chattels, than to have them return as paupers. A diplomatic official who has since been made ambassador, Nelidoff, did not take my view. "You have made a grave political blunder," he repeated several times. In the course of events, however, we were perfectly vindicated. All the Turks who had escaped were afterward permitted to return to their former abodes, by

conditions of the treaty, but they were so completely ruined in the streets and purlieus of Constantinople that they were reduced to utter destitution and were for a long time afterward the terror of the population.

Our headquarters at Adrianople were very lively now. Crowds of people arrived as though bidden to a feast ; some, animated rather late in the day with a thirst for military glory, and others to do *business*, for which there was a splendid opportunity. The military agents had also collected here, so that our former cheerful but modest party resembled a noisy court. As the table in the dining-room was not remarkably large, there was quite a scramble and almost a fight for seats every day. The streets of the town looked like a continuous bazaar. From General Ignatieff, who was shaking hands right and left, and knew how to make himself popular with every one even here, down to the newly-arrived ensign glad to find at last a chance of spending his accumulated wealth, all were feasting and celebrating the victory.

I had to go to Tchorlou to make a few sketches, for which I had had but little time before, owing to other less artistic occupations. The railway was in our hands, and those who liked were allowed to avail themselves of it. At Tchorlou I found many changes. At the little buffet in the station there was such a crowd of people that I would have had great difficulty in getting my wants supplied if the master had not rushed up to me and treated me with the most ceremonious and effusive politeness. I remembered that when we were all-powerful in these parts he had entreated us to protect him from the Bashi-Bazouks, and had asked us to help him recover his stolen property and sheep and cattle. With Strukoff's permission, I had given him a few dragoons to convoy his flocks. It is quite possible that he managed by the aid of this escort not only to protect his own flocks, but to assume proprietary rights over a few of those that had been left to roam at large by the Turks after their flight. If this was indeed the case, there was nothing very remarkable in his gratitude, which took the practical form of a tough piece of leather, intended to represent a beefsteak, and a bottle of his best home-made "Lafitte."

There was no train to take me back, as regular traffic had not yet been re-established, and no one knew when there would be one. I had to order a special train for myself,

which was actually provided for me. Here an interesting incident occurred. Just as we were about to start, a Bulgarian came running up waving a letter in his hand and shouting: "Letter from Prince Reuss to Adrianople!" Knowing that Prince Reuss was the German ambassador at Constantinople, I instantly stopped the train, and made the Bulgarian get in and sit beside me, warning him at the same time not to speak to the railway officials, who were all Austrians, and who had pricked their ears at the mention of Prince Reuss's name. When we arrived I sent the Bulgarian to an inn, but went myself to Ignatieff with the letter. Ignatieff was coming in arm-in-arm with Nelidoff. The Bulgarian I committed to the care of Skalon, who dined him and wined him, and presented him to the commander-in-chief.

The letter turned out to be a very important one. It was a confidential communication from Prince Reuss informing us that the English iron clad fleet had entered the bay. We instantly decided to march on to San Stefano, and to enter Constantinople if the English came any farther.

* * *

When I was about to take my departure on the following day, the good-natured Skalon informed me that His Imperial Highness wanted me to accept as a memento a golden sword (which is only given for great personal valor), but I laughed and thanked him and bolted to the railway station.

Honi soit qui mal y pense!

V. V. VERESTCHAGIN.

V.

M. D. SKOBELEFF.

I REMEMBER as if it had been yesterday the occasion on which I first made acquaintance with Skobeleff in Central Asia in the year 1870. It was at Tashkend, in the only inn of the town. A Frenchman, named Girardé, who was tutor to the children of the governor, General Kaufmann, pointed out to me a young Hussar officer of pleasing appearance, and begged leave to introduce "his former pupil, Skobeleff." I shook the young man's hand; he replied with a courteous bow, and with some rather extravagant expressions of his esteem for me and his happiness in making my acquaintance. I felt myself immediately drawn towards the young man (he was a year younger than myself); but I must confess that I did not show very much warmth in talking to him, on account of a very unpleasant affair in which he had lately been concerned. He had been exploring the frontiers of Bokhara, and on his return made a report upon the suppression of brigandage in those parts—forty brigands killed, and so on, though, as afterwards appeared, there were no brigands at all. This gave rise to a grave scandal. The governor of the province, General Kaufmann, sent for Skobeleff, and, in the presence of a number of officers, rebuked him in a loud voice and in strong terms: "You have told lies, and covered yourself with disgrace." Skobeleff was challenged by two of his brother officers, wounded one of them, and had to leave Turkestan.

Ten years later, the young lieutenant had risen to the rank of general, and had a command-in-chief in the war against the Turkomans. It must be allowed that he showed himself quite worthy of his advancement; but in 1873, during the campaign of Khiva, he committed another error, which, though not so gross as that of 1870, was still serious enough: contrary to the orders of his superior officer, he led his men to the assault of Khiva at the very moment when a deputa-

tion was starting in order to surrender the town and to make complete submission to the Russian commander.

It was in this campaign, however, that Skobeleff made his reputation, and distinguished himself by an act of chivalrous daring. Of the three divisions which had been sent against Khiva, one, the Caucasian division, commanded by General Markosoff, was unable to reach its destination ; in attempting to advance too rapidly, the men exhausted their strength and rode their horses to death, and when they were only fifty miles from Khiva they were obliged to turn back. This piece of the road, consequently, had still to be explored, and a small expedition was to be sent out for the purpose. Skobeleff volunteered to explore it himself. He disguised himself as a Turkoman, and, with only two guides, actually explored and mapped out the road, to within nine miles of the well where the Caucasian division had turned back, and where a strong body of Turkomans was now said to be encamped. I asked Skobeleff afterwards whether he had not met anybody on the way. "Yes," he replied ; "but, whenever I saw people on the road, I sent my two guides on in front ; they would begin to talk about anything that came into their heads, principally about the Russians, and meantime I would ride quietly by. Of course we rode chiefly at night and in the twilight." For this feat Skobeleff received the long-coveted St. George's Cross of the fourth class. General Kaufmann told me that as he handed Skobeleff this token of gallantry he added these words : "In my opinion you have now atoned for your former error ; but you have not yet won my esteem." Bitter !

But Skobeleff won General Kaufmann's esteem in the campaign against Khokand, which soon followed. When the rebellion broke out, he escorted the Russian embassy from Khokand to the frontier of Russia, and at the same time secured the safety of the Khan, and laid his plans so well that he accomplished his purpose without the loss of a single man. One false step, one shot fired by the fugitives, who were a mere handful of men, would have been enough to bring on a bloody struggle, in which the rebels, with their overpowering numbers, must have been victorious. In the war which followed, General Kaufmann annihilated the forces of Khokand at Mahram, and Skobeleff, as commander of the cavalry, was ubiquitous, and worked terrible havoc among the enemy, on one occasion repeating the stratagem by which Gideon the

Israelite, and Akbar the Great Mogul, had won renown. When he heard that the enemy's cavalry were in the neighborhood, he stole up to them at night with a picked body of Cossacks, threw himself upon them as they slept, with loud cries of "Hurrah!" and put a great number to the sword. Skobeleff told me that they picked up 2,000 turbans on the field next day.

At the time of the Russo-Turkish war Skobeleff had already risen to the rank of major-general and won the St. George's Cross (third class), and although when the war began his fame was lighly esteemed, and no command was given to him, yet his behavior in the course of the war was such that at the end of it he was universally regarded as one of our first fighting generals, as the popular hero, and the bravest of the brave.

But at the beginning of the campaign, being tired of inactivity, he took it into his head to do an extremely silly thing, which might have had serious consequences. He persuaded his father, who was at that time in command of a division of Cossacks, that it was possible for his troops to swim across the Danube. The river was in flood at the time, and at least two miles wide. The elder Skobeleff, being a cautious and prudent man, called the regimental colonels together and asked them their opinion. My friend, Colonel Kucharenko, commanding the Kuban regiment, gave his opinion first, with his usual stammer: "It is imp-p-possible, quite imp-p-p-possible!" The brave Levis, commanding the Vladicaucasians, said it might perhaps be attempted, but that probably the greater part of the troops would be drowned. Then Skobeleff invited volunteers, and a few officers and men actually offered themselves. But they all turned back; some gave up as soon as they found themselves out of their depth, others after swimming five or six hundred yards; none got farther than the real bank of the Danube, which rose out of the floods and formed a kind of island. Michael Skobeleff alone swam on, while his father stood on the shore and cried continually, "Misha, turn back; you will be drowned; turn back, Misha!" But he would not turn, and swam on till he almost reached the further shore. He was picked up by a boat within a short distance of the land. His horse made the passage in safety; but the Cossacks, with their short, heavy horses, would have fared much worse, and would cer-

tainly have found a watery grave—though, indeed, Skobeleff's horse was not a remarkably good one, but only a very ordinary mare, and not a gray (his favorite color), but a sorrel.

This was neither the first nor the least feat of the kind that Skobeleff performed. Not long before his death, when he was in command of an army corps, he ordered his cavalry to cross a river. The men had no heart for the business; the colonel declared they would all be drowned. Thereupon Skobeleff jumped upon the back of the nearest troop-horse, and, though the animal showed great reluctance, compelled it to swim to the opposite shore and back again. "You see, brothers, that it can be done," said he to the regiment; "now follow my lead." And the regiment actually crossed the river and came back again without the loss of a single man. This river, however, was not two miles broad.

When the Russian troops were crossing the Danube, Skobeleff, who had not received any appointment, begged permission of General Dragomiroff to act as one of his orderly officers. He excited universal admiration by his fearlessness. Moving about under fire as calmly as if he were walking on the boulevards, he carried his orders always to the right quarter, inspired every one with fresh courage, and behaved like a fighting officer who knows his business. How strongly was he reprimanded afterwards by the commander-in-chief for meddling with matters that did not concern him!

In the second attack on Plevna Skobeleff was entrusted with a battalion—and what was the result? With this single battalion and the Cossacks he actually saved our beaten troops: Prince Shahofskoi plainly states in his report that nothing but the gallant conduct of Skobeleff saved his corps from destruction. With a mere handful of men he advanced right up to Plevna, forced the Turks, who had no idea that their assailants numbered only a few hundreds, to concentrate themselves, drew the whole force of the enemy's attack upon himself, and enabled our disorded regiments to retire in safety. My younger brother, who fell afterwards in the third assault upon Plevna, was with Skobeleff just at this time, and seeing the General's horse killed under him for the second time, dismounted and offered him his own. "I won't take your horse," said Skobeleff; "he is not a gray." But the storm of bullets and shells became so heavy, and the Turks were advancing in such force, that he was obliged to

accept my brother's horse after all, and though it was a sorrel it carried him out of the fire as well as his gray could have done.

At the battle of Lovisha, Skobeleff for the first time commanded a division, which numbered 20,000 men. He was chief of the staff to General Prince Imeritinski, who put the conduct of affairs entirely in his hands, and was a spectator of the battle from a hill at some distance. After the capture

SKOBELEFF.

of the forts, which assuredly no other Russion general would have taken, Prince Imeritinski in his report called Skobeleff the hero of the day, as indeed he was.

There is no doubt whatever that Skobeleff might have taken Plevna on August 30. But what could he do? When, with scanty forces of the left wing, he had, after three days' continuous fighting, taken the Turkish redoubt which commanded the town, and begged for reinforcements, the authorities sent him, out of spite probably, a regiment which had been beaten and demoralized the day before. Osman Pasha threw himself upon "the white general" with overwhelming forces, beat him, and drove him beyond his previous position. *Honi soit qui mal y pense.*

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Skobeleff was always very busy, and both wrote and read a great deal. His reports to the commander-in-chief, treating of the behavior of our officers and soldiers in the course of the Russo-Turkish war, and the real causes of our temporary disasters, show wonderful powers of observation and contain many acute remarks. When I was with Skobeleff at Plevna, I read a number of these reports, and learned from him that they were not at all well received in high quarters.

Skobeleff was master of French, English, and German, and had a remarkably thorough knowledge of the country which was the theatre of the Russo-Turkish war. He had a great admiration for the military genius of Napoleon among men of the past, and of Moltke among his contemporaries. He had a poor opinion of Totleben's abilities, and once, I remember, he was quite enraged because I spoke in praise of Gourko; he could not help laughing when he remembered how that General once ducked under cover to avoid a Turkish shell. The other heroes of the Russo-Turkish war he called cowards and dotards. "What do you think, Vassily Vassilievitch?" he said to me once on coming out of a council of war, held just after the third attack upon Plevna, in which our great captains had been deliberating whether we should maintain our positions or not. "What name do such creatures deserve? Imagine an artist who should besmear his canvas continually with reds and blues and greens and other colors, without producing, and without the smallest faculty of producing, any intelligible result!"

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It is impossible for any one who has not actually seen

Skobeleff under fire to imagine the calmness and coolness which he displayed in a storm of bullets and shells. Not that this calmness meant insensibility. I have already mentioned that Skobeleff, according to his own testimony, was full of apprehensions, and at the beginning of a battle always fancied that that day would assuredly be his last. How great, then, must have been his strength of will! What an effort must this calmness have cost him! Indeed, he was always in a state of internal excitement. When he was talking it was almost impossible for him to sit still; he would pace up and down like a caged tiger. When he was obliged to sit still at table, he would take bread or anything else that was within his reach and knead it between his fingers. I often used to take him by the hand and tell him that he really must sit quiet for a little.

For all his courage under fire, he was a regular coward at headquarters and in the presence of high personages. Before his troops he always appeared in smart dress and with his hair neatly trimmed and scented; but when he appeared before his superiors it was always in a worn-out coat, with a cloak hanging all awry, and a cap crushed down on the back of his head, as if he were afraid that his elegance might give as much offense as his gallantry. On my second journey from Paris to the Danube, I visited Skobeleff's mother, who begged me to take a small case which her son much needed. When the luggage was being examined at the custom-house on the frontier I had to open the case, and found it to contain only cosmetics. In the company of persons of high rank Skobeleff was embarrassed, and wore an air of humility that was almost pitiable, the result, evidently, of embarassment. It is the custom in Russia to kiss the hand of the Czar and the Grand Dukes, or, if you wish to be particularly courteous, to kiss the hand and the shoulder; but Skobeleff went so far as to kiss three times, and performed this ceremony so rapidly that it was impossible to stop him.

This triple kissing, however, he did not reserve exclusively for these exalted personages. Once, when we were breakfasting together in a separate room of a *gargote* in Paris, he could not refrain from bestowing three kisses on the hand of the waitress, though she was a girl of quite ordinary appearance. On this occasion, however, he did not hurry himself, but performed the ceremony with feeling and with appro-

priate intervals. He actually wished to make this same girl a present of a hundred francs simply because she had changed a note of a thousand francs for him, and though I dissuaded him from this extravagance, he still insisted on giving her twenty francs. This reckless squandering of money is a genuine feature of the Slav character. He was good-natured, but his good-nature almost bordered on inconsiderateness. For instance, if he met poor people, he generally ordered one of the subalterns who accompanied him to give the poor man a gold piece ; but as he often forgot the outlays made for him, and often had no money, it naturally followed that meeting poor people was more alarming to his orderlies than meeting the enemy. Latterly I noticed in him an inclination to do justice. I remember, for example, that after the battle of Shenovo I found him busy with a letter of apology to an officer commanding a battalion under him to whom he had been unjust. A general in command of a detachment who confesses a fault to a major is a rare, if not a unique, phenomenon in any army.

* * *

Skobeleff gave me as a memento his banner, which he had carried in twenty-two engagements. The list of these engagements, drawn up carefully by himself, I have deposited in the Imperial Library. The banner hangs in my studio ; it is a piece of red silk, with a yellow cross, on a Cossack's pike, showing many bullet-holes, and much tattered by all the service it has seen. When he was starting on his last campaign against the Turkomans, he remembered the banner, and said I must give it back to him, or else give him a new one instead. I did not wish to give him back the old one, and for a long time could not make up my mind to give him a new one, as I knew that if he did not like it he would give it to the men to wrap their feet in. At last, however, I presented him with a very handsome new banner. It consisted on one side of a fringed Indian shawl, and on the other of a piece of red Chinese satin, with a St. Andrew's cross in blue, Skobeleff's initials, and the year. I cut out the banner myself, and my wife embroidered it. I heard from my brother, who was then serving as one of Skobeleff's orderlies, that the flag was much admired by the General and by the friendly Turkomans, and that they were never tired of looking at it. But presently

began a series of misfortunes and failures ; the enemy made sallies from Geok-Tepe, killed many of our men, and took a quantity of arms, a flag, and two guns. Skobeleff was in despair. "Give me back my old banner," he cried ; "this new one is unlucky." I refused. The enemy made another sally, and our army again endured heavy loss. He repeated his demand : "Give me back my lucky banner, and take your unlucky one." "I won't give it up," was my answer. At last Skobeleff took Geok-Tepe by storm, inflicting severe loss on the enemy, taking a great quantity of arms, &c., and gaining a triumphant success : so that the reputation of my banner was quite re-established, to the delight of the General and the Turkomans. This beautiful, lucky and unlucky flag now waves over Skobeleff's grave.

This lovable and sympathetic nature was deeply tinged with superstition. Skobeleff believed in lucky and unlucky days, in lucky meetings, in omens and forebodings. Nothing would have induced him to sit down with thirteen at table ; the spilling of a little salt was enough to make him start or even to jump up from his seat, and he could not stay in a room in which three candles were burning.

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One day Skobeleff said to me, "Vassily Vassilievitch, what do you take to be the purpose of these Nihilists and Anarchists? I am free to confess that I do not understand what they are about." "Their views," I replied, "are, as I understand them, first, that there is to be no more war, and secondly, that all painting is humbug ; so that if they came into power, you, with your generalship and your victories, and I, with all my pictures, would be sent to the devil." "Now I, understand," said Skobeleff, "and from this moment I am their determined foe."

Skobeleff, however, like so many others, failed to understand that the springs of that violent revolutionary movement which goes by the name of Nihilism lie deep down in the present state of society in Russia, and that it is not to be suppressed by any conceivable police regulations. "I am afraid that something terrible is going to happen," I said to Skobeleff shortly before he started for Turkestan in 1880, when the attempts upon the life of the late Czar were becoming more and more frequent. "My belief is," he replied,

"that they will all be trapped like so many mice." "I believe, on the contrary," said I, "that they will achieve their purpose and kill the Czar." After the assassination of Alexander II. Skobeleff said to my brother at Geok-Tepe: "Vassily Vassilievitch told me some time ago that this was going to happen."

I remember Skobeleff telling me that on his way through Odessa he met Privy Councillor Panutin, whose business it was to superintend the deportation of Nihilists to the island of Sachalin. There were some seven hundred young people ready to be shipped off, some charged with serious, others with trifling offenses, a certain proportion probably being quite innocent. All were brought to the place where, as the Russian proverb says: "Makar never yet drove his cattle." "When are you going to try all these cases?" asked Skobeleff; "it will take a terribly long time." "What is there to try?" answered the councillor; "it does not take long to sentence them. We just send them off—God may judge them there."

* * *

Skobeleff's figure stands before me now, the figure of a beloved, sympathetic man and highly gifted soldier, with all the merits and faults of the Slav character.

It would be out of place here to repeat what Skobeleff said in the circle of his friends; it is enough to say that he was always an advocate of the normal development of Russia, of progress, not of retrogression.

But it seemed to me that he had no fixed point of view in regard to these questions. I often told him that he might be bribed (not with money, of course, but with honors). He disputed this very warmly, and put on the appearance of being injured; but I believe that I was not mistaken.

Skobeleff was very ambitious, and would hardly have endured even a temporary loss of his command. I attribute the change in his views within the last few months of his life to his ambition. When I attacked him at our last meeting in Berlin for his violent speech at St. Petersburg, he tried to justify himself. When, however, I pointed out to him that he had done no one any good, and showed into whose hands he was playing by forcing Russia into a war, he looked round to see that no one heard us, and said angrily: "Then I will

tell you the truth, Vassily Vassilievitch. I could not help myself; *they* forced me into it!"

As to who the persons were, I keep silence.

He moreover gave me his word of honor not to make any more such speeches. He promised—and spoke again in Paris.

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P.S.—Skobeleff's last attacks on Germany were not made without definite grounds.

On his return from the manœuvres of the Prussian army, he seemed to me extremely excited; everything that he had seen and heard in Germany pointed, he thought, to a speedy war with Russia: even in the words which the German Emperor addressed to him at his parting audience, words that seemed to me completely innocent, Skobeleff heard a threat. I remember that he imitated the way in which the Emperor William sat there on his horse, and the tone in which, surrounded by a numerous and brilliant suite, he entrusted him with a greeting to the Emperor of Russia. "You have subjected us to the closest scrutiny" ("Vous venez de m'examiner jusqu'à mes boyaux"), the German Emperor is reported to have said to him. "You have only seen two corps, but tell his Majesty the Emperor that all the fifteen corps do their duty equally well when occasion requires."

These words must be authentic, for Skobeleff noted them down at once. I found nothing in them, as I have already said, which intimated a threat, but Skobeleff thought differently. Still more hostile feelings were roused in him by an expression used by the late Prince Frederick Charles. The Prince, known not only as a brave cavalry officer, but also as an honest and upright man, tapped Skobeleff on the shoulder in a friendly manner and said: "My dear friend, do what you like, Austria must go to Salonica."

These words also were at once noted down by Skobeleff, and he could not think of them later with coolness. "So it is a settled thing," said he, stalking from one corner to the other of his little room like a tiger in a cage. "So Germany helps them, and we are to be silent, and look on calmly!" &c.

The speeches he made after this may have been precipitate, but they were not uttered under the influence of wine, as was maintained at the time. This is proved by the above reminiscence.

VI.

I. S. TURGENIEFF.

1879–1883.

I WAS not intimately acquainted with Turgenieff until the last years of his life, of which I now give a short account.

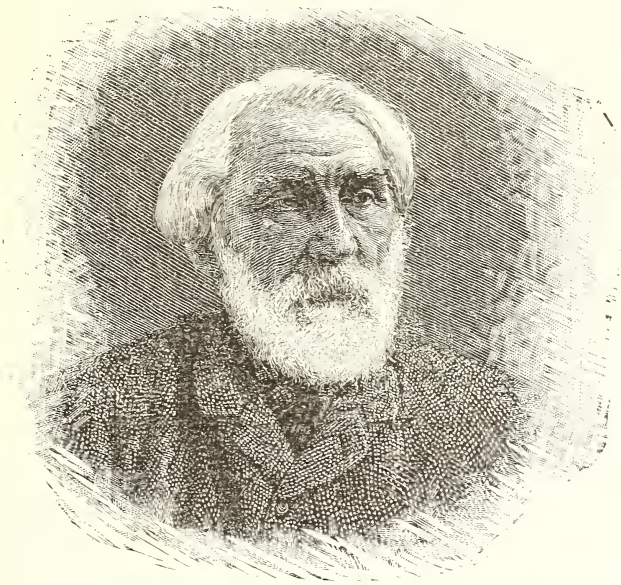
Our acquaintance dates from the time when I was in the lower class of the naval cadet corps (in 1855), to which he brought his nephew, also a Turgenieff. I then knew nothing of his works, but remember that both we cadets and our officers looked at Ivan Sergeievitch with curiosity. In fact, he was worth looking at. He seemed a giant, especially by contrast with little half-developed creatures like us. I can still see him, as if it were yesterday, with his hands crossed behind his back, walking about among our beds.

His nephew, a little fellow, with a face like a pug, was given the very first day his nickname of "Madcap;" he soon ran away from the corps, but Ivan Sergeievitch brought him back again bound. I forgot to inquire after this nephew; if he was not the Mishka of whom Turgenieff afterwards wrote about and described, he was at any rate very like him.

* * *

Many years passed. I read and re-read "The Sportsman's Diary," and then all Turgenieff's stories and novels. It happened that I read Antonovitch's critique on "Fathers and Sons" before I read the novel itself, and remember very well that it seemed to me partial. But when I read the novel I was much struck by the narrowness and one-sidedness of the critic's judgments. The effect this novel had upon me was immense. I have read it more than once since, discovering each time new beauties, new master-touches, and wondering each time at the author's impartiality and his skill in concealing his likes and dislikes. Not only the chief characters, but also the secondary personages drawn with merely a few touches, were living beings, created by a highly gifted artist.

"Virgin Soil" I did not like at all. In the first part there is much that is natural, and the types are true; but the second part is evidently not the result of observation, but founded on information and conjecture which Turgenieff received at third hand. I used bad language, I confess, when I read the second part; not that the subject shocked me—not at all; for I am of opinion that in the hands of a great genius anything can be the subject of artistic representation,



TURGENIEFF.

assuming that this great genius is acquainted with the subject on which he writes.

* * *

To illustrate my meaning I will take the well-known French novelist Zola. Some of his novels, e. g. "L'Assommoir," move in an atmosphere of truth, and are remarkable for the correctness of the types; others, like "Nana," are weaker. The author is blamed for the filth described in the latter; but I am far from agreeing to that, because in my

opinion the representation of certain strata of society is impossible if certain explanations are not made and certain pictures drawn ; at any rate, it is important for the history of the development of the human race that all sides of contemporary life should be examined and described. What I find fault with in Zola is that he did not know the stratum of society which he describes in "Nana" at all ; and, as he only grasped its more superficial and prominent features and coarseness, he was not able to investigate and reproduce the internal connection of the phenomena ; he piles one deformity on another, and astonishes the reader, but does not convince him.

Passing from these observations to Zola's means and materials, I must observe that it was impossible that he should know the so-called demi-monde. He leads a very retired life, and only once looked into the boudoir of a luxurious *cocotte*, while she was absent, in order to be able to describe her bedroom. Ivan Sergeievitch told me that he noticed at a party, where the author of "Nana" was to read, how his friend became more and more nervous and pale as the number of the guests increased, and that he even trembled. "What is the matter with you, my dear friend?" asked Turgenieff. "I confess," answered Zola, "that I have never yet had an opportunity of being in a circle of ladies in whose presence one has to be circumspect." Now, is it conceivable that an author who knows the world so little should be able to describe the private life of the aristocracy, their manners, their society, etc.?

I return to "Virgin Soil" to observe that a similar ignorance of the society described, only in quite another sphere, struck me in the second part of this novel. Here nothing is from nature, nothing is founded on observation : everything is out of his head, as artists say.

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It was in the year 1876, if I am not mistaken, that I took rooms in a small hotel in Paris belonging to a Russian, W. I do not know whether he knew Ivan Sergeievitch, or wanted to make his acquaintance when occasion offered, but he once asked me if I was acquainted with Turgenieff. "By name," I said, "I have certainly known him a long time, and have a high opinion of his works." A few days afterwards W.

showed me a letter. "Do you know the handwriting?" "No, it is not known to me." "It is a letter from Turgenieff, in which he says that he would be glad to make your acquaintance; go and see him when you like." I replied that I should certainly not go, as I did not like begging for acquaintance with celebrated people.

* * *

After the Turkish war the painter Bogoliuboff remarked casually: "There is a man who wants to know you very much indeed." "Who is it?" "Ivan Sergeievitch Turgenieff." I was heartily pleased, and sent a request that he would visit me at any time that suited him. When this cherished guest came to Maisons-Laffitte, I frankly confess that I wanted to fall on his neck and tell him how deeply I admired and respected him. But it was not to be. I was obliged to introduce a friend, General S., who was present, and we only exchanged a few commonplace, friendly words. Turgenieff looked at my work with great interest. Two or three pictures of the Turkish war were already begun. He was particularly pleased with my picture of the transport of the wounded, and he gave a name to each of the soldiers represented in the picture. "That is Nikifor, from Tamboff; that is Sidoroff, from Nijni," etc.

Ivan Sergeievitch paid me two more visits afterwards, and brought with him his friend, Oniegin, who visited the author during his last illness more frequently than the rest of us.

* * *

I also went to see Turgenieff several times. At the time of my first visit he was suffering from gout. Even then the attacks of the malady were evidently very violent, as could be seen from his extremely exhausted and weak appearance after each attack.

Turgenieff treated his visitors with remarkable amiability and kindness; inquired sympathetically, even during his illness, after the works which were in hand, and those which were to come, and spoke modestly and sincerely about himself, in a refined voice, and with a good-natured smile on his face.

It rather seemed to me, and I think I was not mistaken,

that after the ovations which were given him in Moscow and St. Petersburg, Ivan Sergeievitch became a little more self-conscious. In his letters he now wrote "Dear" instead of "Honored," but he always remained friendly and ready to aid as far as lay in his power. When I exhibited my works in Paris, he first assisted me to find a place for the exhibition, and then introduced me to the Paris public by a few lines in the "XIX. Siècle."

He helped, moreover, not only with advice, but with material assistance, all who applied to him. He gave money to many young men who were forced to leave Russia and "Nihilized," as one of them expressed it, in Paris. (I drew Ivan Sergeievitch's attention to this characteristic expression, and he laughed heartily at it.)

The assistance which he gave to the emigrants, his free and independent way of thinking, and, above all, the publication in the "Temps" of the narrative of a youth who, owing to a misunderstanding, spent four years in prison, caused Turgenieff to be considered a Red Republican in the upper circles in St. Petersburg. In 1880 he took an opportunity of telling me, with evident uneasiness, that Prince Orloff had visited him and brought him an order to return to Russia. I was sincerely convinced that there was nothing in it, and that there could be nothing, and told him so with confidence, but I remember that his anxiety did not disappear. In fact, nobody at St. Petersburg molested him, and the order he had received was probably only intended as a warning.

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The fact that Turgenieff was intending to write a great novel, and had already begun it, I first learned from his friend, the well-known German critic Pietsch, and afterwards from himself; after his death I was told that he had sketched a novel which treated of the intellectual movement among the Russian youth of modern times. Its purport was said to be as follows: A cultivated young Russian lady becomes acquainted in Paris with a young Frenchman, a Radical, and is intimate with him, but afterwards leaves him to join a representative of Russian Radicalism, whose views and convictions are opposed to those which the Frenchman holds on the same questions.

Judging from his last works, not excepting "Clara Militch," one is forced to the conclusion that the talent of the author of "Fathers and Sons" can hardly have risen to its former height. Certainly even in his last works we meet with many beautiful thoughts and masterly sketches, but as a rule his characters no longer have their former quiet attractiveness nor their former freshness and life.

The impression left by his smaller works, *e. g.*, by the "Poems in Prose," is for the most part a depressing one. They constantly remind me of the phrase with which he once answered me when I asked how he was: "I am beginning to feel the gloom of death."

Even such reminiscences as the story of "Mishka" are, as far as type of characters go, far behind "The Sportsman's Diary." The former tale ("Mishka") I heard from the author's lips, and it then made an incomparably greater impression upon me than when I read it later.

I knew that Turgenieff recited well, but latterly he was always tired, began to speak lazily and against the grain, and only grew slightly more lively when he threw himself into his part. On this occasion, when, in reciting the story of "Mishka," he came to the passage where Mishka leads a whole company of dancing beggars, Ivan Sergeievitch got up briskly from his chair, made gestures with his hands, and began to dance a Russian *trepak*—and how he did dance it! He bent his knees and sang, "Tra-ta-ta-ta-ta! Tra-ta-ta!" He seemed forty years younger as he bent himself; and how he moved his shoulders this way and that! His gray locks fell over his face, which was rosy, beaming, and happy. I was delighted with him, and could not refrain from clapping my hands and calling out, "Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!" He did not seem in the least tired, for as long as I sat with him he continued his lively recitation. And yet that was shortly before disease clutched him in its claws, as he expressed it. Now, when I know that already at that time two vertebræ were attacked by cancer, I cannot think of that hour without astonishment.

* * *

I was myself suffering from a severe attack of illness in the spring of 1882, when I learned that Turgenieff was seriously ill. As soon as I could get up, at the beginning of the

summer, I drove to see him. I called out to him from the stairs. "What is the meaning of this? How can anybody be ill so long?" Entering the room, I saw the same kindly smile and heard the same refined voice. "What is to be done? Sickness holds me fast, and will not let me go." There was no decided change in Ivan Sergeievitch since the day I had seen him dance, and that misled me: I was firmly convinced that he would recover, and told everybody so who asked me.

Turgenieff was very lively, and although he complained of constant and very severe neuralgic pains in his chest and back, yet he begged me to stay with him, told stories with animation, raising himself up in bed and laughing a great deal. Among other things, we talked of literature and his own writings. Ivan Sergeievitch expressed his great respect for Léon Tolstoi's talent, but added: "What Tolstoi lacks is poetry: it is completely wanting in his productions." I did not refrain from expressing my opinion, which was the reverse of his, and mentioned as examples the highly poetical creations of "The Cossacks," "Polikushka," and others. Turgenieff seemed to keep to his own opinion, but did not discuss it further.

Lavroff, a well-known character, who had been lately banished from France, was in the room when I came to pay my visit. When he had taken his departure, Turgenieff asked me not to tell anybody that I had seen Lavroff, and told me a curious little piece of French administration. L. was banished from France, but, after much protesting, the prefect of police summoned Turgenieff and asked him about L. Turgenieff could only tell him that L. was the most harmless of men, although an idealist who was easily carried away. "We believe you," said the prefect, and L. received secret permission to come to France, one might almost say through Turgenieff's mediation.

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I still believe to-day, as I did then in talking to Turgenieff, that he was wrong in assigning himself a too modest place among Russian authors. Bielinski, to be sure, did not think highly of him; but that may be explained by the fact that Turgenieff had not then attained maturity and had too much scientific cultivation for a Russian genius; while Bielinski,

who well knew the want of finish in the native diamonds, did not quite understand the combination in one person of a literary genius of the first rank and a serious Hegelian. In cultivation Turgenieff certainly stood above all our authors. As regards power, he is perhaps behind some others ; but in the fullness and loftiness of his creative genius he ranks next to Pushkin and Léon Tolstoi. The plot of a story—a matter which many think unimportant, but which, in my opinion, is the most difficult part of the work of creation, and in which but few succeed—is almost always good in Turgenieff. It seems easier to sketch characters than to make them act according to life, and die naturally. Gogol, for instance, has a great gift for delineating character, but is weak in inventing plots ; and expressive as a large number of his characters appear when taken singly, the whole course of the action is correspondingly weak ; only children and half-educated people can treat seriously the story of the "Dead Souls" which are to be transported to the government of Chersson or some other country, or the deeds of "Revisor," &c. Moreover, the fact must not be disregarded that such talent, if we take the above-mentioned Gogol as an example, is one-sided : by the side of a negative type of character, which is strikingly powerful and true to nature, he places a positive type which is absolutely false and perfectly worthless.

With Turgenieff it is different. To be just it must be confessed that the characters in the "Diary of a Sportsman," though they show great penetration, nevertheless rank lower than those astonishing characters of Gogol's ; but they live and act in a rational manner—no invisible power forces them into actions and vaudeville intrigues, which are repugnant to a healthy human understanding. Further, Turgenieff, as has been said before, is successful not only with this or that favorite type of character, but all his personages, insipid and sensible, clever and stupid, fathers and children—all are equally true, and defined with equal clearness.

I repeat—in the completeness and the elevation of his genius he has, in my opinion, very few equals besides Pushkin and Léon Tolstoi ; none perhaps, except Lermontoff, in his prose. The characters in the latter's poems are indistinct and not natural.

* * *

But let us return to Turgenieff's illness. During the last

visit I paid him (the one mentioned above) he complained sadly that he could not travel to Russia. "Why," I asked, "do you want to go to Russia now? You ought first to get well, quite well, here." "Quite true, but there I could go on with my work; I have something in my head which can only be written there." He shook his head significantly.

Turgenieff was ill all through the autumn and winter. I had no opportunity of speaking to any of the doctors who were attending him, and thought that his illness was not fatal.

Once, when I was in Rue de Douai, I wrote a few words asking about his state, and sent the note up to him; but the servant brought it back. M. Turgenieff was lying down, and was unable to read. The blinds were drawn down. He asked for my name. I understood that his condition was serious, and went away so as not to disturb him.

On my return from my second tour in India I inquired again. He was very ill, and no one was admitted. When I came back from Moscow I met Oniegin, whom I have mentioned before, and learnt from him that not only Ivan Sergeievitch's months but his days were numbered. I drove to Bougival, where he then was. On the way, his figure as it had formerly been rose up before my eyes; but when I entered the room, intending to begin the conversation with a joke as of old, the words stuck in my throat. On the couch, his body contorted with suffering, lay Turgenieff, but apparently not the one I had known, not the majestic figure with the beautiful head, but a little man, emaciated, as yellow as wax, with sunken eyes, and sad, lifeless expression.

He seemed to perceive the painful impression he made, and immediately began to talk of dying, saying that there was no hope, etc. "We two," he added, "are different in character. I was always weak; you are strong and decided." Tears came into my eyes; I tried to contradict him, but Ivan Sergeievitch interrupted me irritably: "For God's sake, leave off trying to console me, Vassily Vassilievitch: I am not a child, and can estimate my position. My malady is incurable; I suffer to such an extent that I call upon death a hundred times a day. I do not fear parting from life, and regret nothing; one or two friends, whom one does not exactly love, but to whom one has grown accustomed——"

I took up his tone a little ; but when I admitted that he had got worse, I heard Oniegin, who was present, hastily correct me—" How could one help looking worse after such a long illness ? " I comprehended that caution was to be used, and maintained that where there was no directly fatal disease death was not unavoidable, and that he was not yet of the age when one must die. " You are only sixty-five, are you ? " " Sixty-four," he corrected me, and began again to oppose what I said, but received my words of consolation more calmly ; one could see that they were not unpleasant to him, and that he himself had still some hope.

He asked me about my work, where I was, and where I intended to travel. I told him that I was going to take the waters, and should reappear again in a month—" I give you a month's respite ; if you do not recover in that time, beware : you will have to reckon with me." Ivan Sergeievitch smiled at this threat. " If you come in a month, in three or six months, you will still find me in the same condition."

I took the liberty of warning him against the frequent use of morphia ; if narcotics were absolutely necessary, he should at any rate use it alternately with chloral. " I should be very glad ; but what is to be done ? When the pains are excruciating one is ready to take anything in the world to lessen them."

That day Turgenieff was dressed, as he had tried a drive ; but driving over paved streets tired him. He soon came back, and was then intending to retire to his bed. That was the last time he went out of the house.

Oniegin, with whom I went away, told me as we went, " Turgenieff does not know that he will not live even as long as he says. I have heard from Doctor Bielogolofy that all his blood-vessels are giving way."

* * *

About a month later I returned. Ivan Sergeievitch lay in his bed. He had grown yellower and more withered ; there was no doubt that he was dying. I had read in the Russian papers that he was better and drove out, and in that belief I went to him.

He introduced me to his old friend Toporoff, who was sitting by his bedside. " You are better, I hear ? You take drives ? "

"Oh," groaned the sick man, "what kind of improvement is this, and how can I, chained to my bed, think of drives? Who told you that?" "I read it in the paper." "Can one believe what the papers say? See how I look!"

"I know," he began, when we were alone, "that I shall not live to see the New Year." "How do you know that?" "I see it in everything, feel it myself, and gather it from the doctor's words also; they intimate that I should put my affairs in order." It seemed odd to me that the doctors, who, as far as I knew, constantly gave him hopes, as well as all those around him, should say that to him. Turgenieff did not make that remark without cause, as I learnt later.

I was just going to reply to him with "What can we do? We must all come to that——" but when I saw how his dying eyes looked penetratingly at me awaiting my answer I suppressed these words and said, "Even doctors can be mistaken." I quoted Count Chambord as an example, to whom the doctors foretold a certain death, and whose condition improved—an example which was, to be sure, a very unfortunate one, as Count Chambord actually did die soon afterwards. Turgenieff, however, listened attentively: one could see that he had by no means lost all hope, and that he wished others should hope also. He regretted that he had not been able to do all that was necessary. "You say you have not done anything?" "Not that—you do not understand me: I am speaking of my affairs, which I did not put in order at the right time." "But that can be easily remedied." "No, that is impossible. My estate," he continued in a low voice, "has not yet been sold. I have always been meaning to sell it, but was always undecided and put it off." "Of course it was hard for you to part with it." "Yes, it was hard; but if I die now the estate will go to God knows whom," and he shook his head sadly.

I thought he was troubled about his daughter whom I had once met at his house and become acquainted with. She is a pretty woman, a brunette, very like her father, and married to a Frenchman, whose circumstances had not been very brilliant latterly. As I learned afterwards, however, he was troubled because it was not possible for him to bestow all his property on the person for whom he had cherished a special affection all his life.

Ivan Sergeievitch inquired with the greatest interest

about my family, my wife, my late parents, and my brothers. At the beginning of our conversation he asked his attendant, Madame Arnold, to make an injection of morphia. She did it, and asked him if he would not have breakfast. "What is there?" "Salmon." He seemed to consider, raised his hand to his head, and thought a long time.

"Well, give me some salmon, at any rate, and some soft-boiled eggs." One could see that he still had some appetite. "How is your digestion?" "I digest nothing, so I will eat this salmon and take the consequences."

I again spoke of morphia and begged him not to inject too much. "It does not matter," he said; "my complaint is incurable, I know." After mentioning the scientific name of his complaint, he added: "Take a medical dictionary: look it up. There you will find it put down in plain terms as 'incurable.'"

"In a week's time I shall pay you another visit." "Come; but take care: if you come in two weeks' time they will be carrying me out feet foremost."

As I left him I held up my finger threateningly and called out, "Beware of too much morphia." With a smile he nodded his head in sign of agreement, and followed me with a sad look, which stayed in my memory. It happened as he said: almost exactly two weeks later he was a corpse.

And how much he wished to live!

* * *

The impression I received from my last visit was so sad that I went again in four days.

It was afternoon, and Ivan Sergeievitch was asleep, having just had an injection of morphia. I sat in the next room, a modest, comfortable apartment arranged in bachelor fashion—a writing-table, a Turkish divan, many pictures on the walls, chiefly by Russian artists, and a not particularly successful portrait of Turgenieff himself.

I conversed with Madame Arnold, who had taken care of the invalid for a long time. She said that they still hoped for his recovery, that the doctors had different opinions about the disease, and that she personally was made most uneasy by the fact that the gout had totally disappeared from the feet, and consequently must have gone higher. I had heard the patient himself talk about that even at the beginning of

his illness; he said plainly that he felt the gout already in the region of the heart. At my last visit he said, complaining of the diminution of his strength, "If you were only to see my feet—just look—nothing but bones." I decided not to look, for my late father came into my mind, whose feet had completely withered before his death. Madame Arnold declared that nobody had ever advised Turgenieff to arrange his affairs, and that it was only a stratagem on his part to discover my opinion of his condition, because he suspected that the people round him had agreed to soothe him by concealing the truth. However, it is improbable that his regret was quite unfounded; he had probably been urged by somebody or other to arrange his affairs more quickly. Madame Arnold also told me that many Paris celebrities visited Ivan Sergeievitch, among others Emil Augier. "C'est un auteur dramatique très-connu," she added by way of explanation; "he came lately to read a new piece."

I will here mention that I seldom heard Turgenieff express an opinion about either past or present celebrities. He once spoke of A. S. Pushkin in a very reverent and serious tone; the expression of his face at that moment was very like the portrait which is prefixed to the complete edition of his works; he wrinkled his brow and raised his fore-finger significantly. I remember, among other things, his telling me a story about Victor Hugo, which shows that the poet was not very well read—"We were talking of Goethe; Hugo disagreed with me, and attacked Goethe for his 'Wallenstein.' 'But, Maître,' I said, '"Wallenstein" was not written by Goethe, but by Schiller.' 'Oh, well, it's all the same,' answered Hugo, and began to talk at random, to conceal his mistake."

Madame Arnold also told me that Turgenieff was much agitated by a letter which he wrote from his deathbed to Léon Tolstoi, begging him not to lay down his pen, but to continue to use it in the service of his country—"I was sitting by the table when he called me; he gave me a piece of paper on which he had written in pencil, and said: 'Please send this off at once: it is very, very urgent.'"

* * *

I was laid up by a very violent cold, and went into hos-

pital, so that I was not able to drive to Bougival for eight or ten days.

"M. Turgenieff is very ill," the concierge said as I entered the house; "the doctor has just gone; he thought my master would not live through the day." Was it possible? I went quickly into the little house—not a soul anywhere; I went up the stairs—no one there either. The whole Viardot family were sitting in their room; there was also a Russian there—Prince Meshtchersky, who sometimes visited Turgenieff, and had been sitting by him for the last three days with the Viardots. They came round me and told me that the invalid was hopelessly ill and that the end was not far off.

"Go and see him." "No, I will not disturb him." "You will not disturb him, for he lies in the death-agony." I entered the room. Ivan Sergeievitch lay on his back, his arms stretched out and pressed close to his body, his eyes almost closed, his mouth terribly wide open; and his head, sunk far back, a little tunnel to the left, rose at each breath; something evidently was choking the sick man; he wanted something; he could not breathe. I could not bear the sight, and burst into tears.

The death struggle had begun some hours before; the end seemed near. The other members of the household went to breakfast, and I remained by the bedside with Madame Arnold, who constantly moistened the sick man's dry tongue.

The sitting-room wore a desolate aspect; a servant was bustling about the room, dusting and sweeping without pity, and talking loudly with the other servants as they went to and fro. One could see that there was no longer any reason for consideration.

In a low voice Madame Arnold told me that Turgenieff had taken leave of everybody the evening before, and immediately after began to wander. I had already heard from Meshtchersky that the delirium probably came on when Ivan Sergeievitch began to talk Russian. Nobody, of course, among those round him understood him, and they all asked, "Qu'est-ce qu'il dit?" "Farewell, my dear ones," murmured Turgenieff. "My ——" "I cannot at all understand that last expression," observed Meshtchersky; "it seems to me as if Ivan Sergeievitch thought himself a Rus-

sian *paterfamilias* taking leave of his family and household."

Twice a sad moan came from Turgenieff's lips; he turned his head a little and moved it straight. His hands did not stir once during a whole hour. His breathing became slower and weaker. I intended to stay till the last moment, but Meshtchersky begged me in the name of the Viardot family to go to Doctor Brouardel and tell him what I had seen, or, in the event of his absence, to leave a letter describing the patient's condition. I took the letter, and touched for the last time Ivan Sergeievitch's hand, which was already growing cold.

* * *

An hour later Turgenieff was dead.

Not finding Doctor Brouardel at home, I left the letter for him; the doctor did not come till the third day. I telegraphed to two intimate acquaintances of the deceased, Oniegin and Prince Orloff. I wished also to send the news to our distant home; but as I could not count myself among the friends of the deceased, I did not think I was justified in sending news of this national grief in my own name.

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